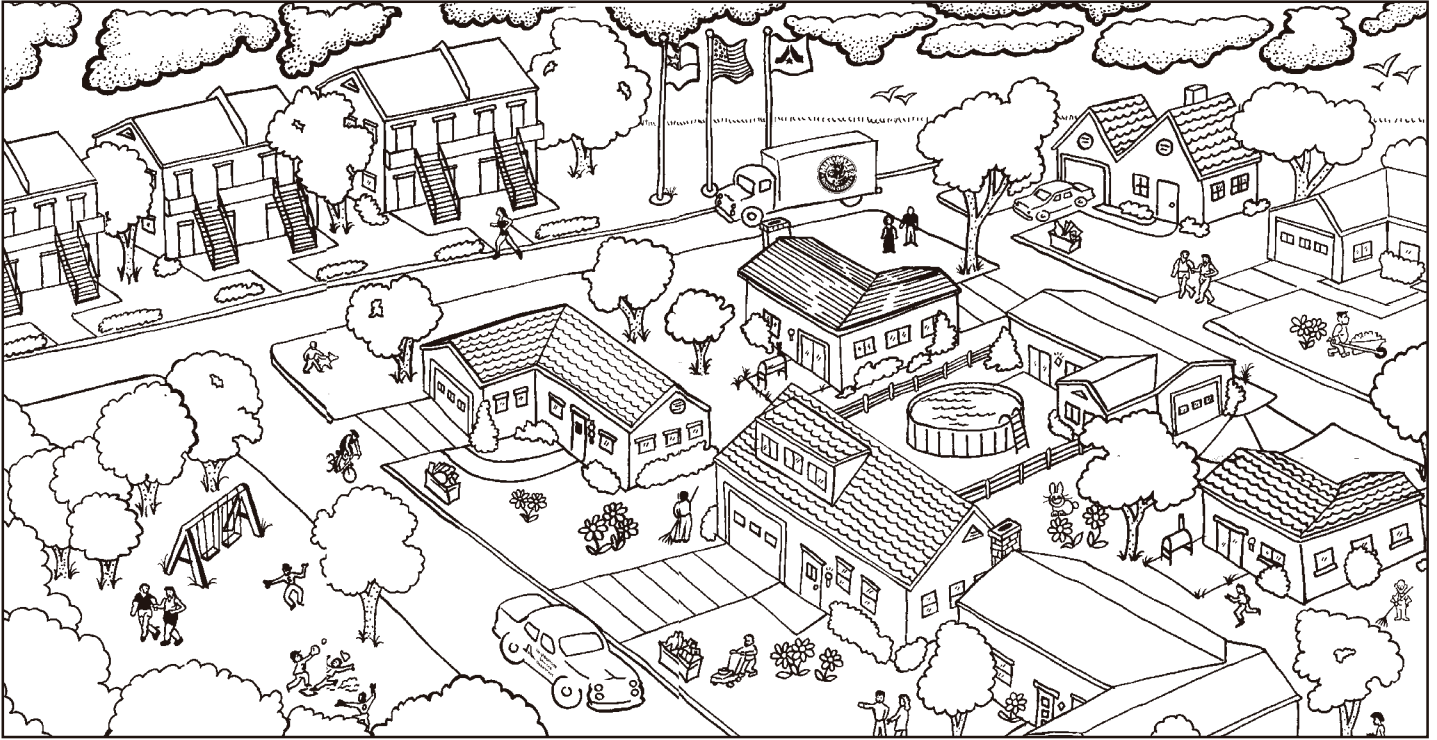

Neighborhood Organizational Handbook

Arlington, Texas



Acknowledgements

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I. Introduction

The initial idea and ultimate concept for this document evolved out of the City of Arlington's sector-based comprehensive planning program. In the past few years, it has become apparent that there is a great need for neighborhood organizational tools and technical assistance.

Since the comprehensive planning program began, citizens all over the city have expressed a strong desire to be more active in their respective neighborhoods. This document has been developed to address part of this demonstrated need.

The Neighborhood Organizational Handbook has been designed to function as an informational resource for citizens that are interested in organizing their neighborhood. It does not have to be read from front to back. However, the information that it contains is presented in a chronological format. Tabs have been added to provide quick and easy access and readers should feel free to utilize the document as a reference source.

The City's Manager's Office would also be interested in any feedback that you may be able to provide regarding this document. You can phone R.J. Blair, Neighborhood Coordinator at 817-459-6104, email at blairr@ci.arlington.tx.us or mail any suggestions or comments to: P.O. Box 90231, MS 01-0300, Arlington TX 76004-3231.

I. Introduction

The History of Arlington

Arlington has undergone numerous transformations since its founding in 1875. Most of these transformations were prompted by the economy and location of the City and, more recently, by the overall economy of the region. The last forty years of explosive growth has been the guiding force behind Arlington's success. Arlington's neighborhoods have also experienced similar types of transformations and experiences throughout the city.

In the early 1900's, Arlington was the center of a small agricultural community. Most of the people living around Arlington either worked on a farm or for a business that supported the area's agricultural base. At that time, there were few traditional neighborhoods in existence, as we know them today.

Because of its location along the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, Arlington served as the main link between the surrounding farms and major markets to the east and west. The location of the city between Dallas and Fort Worth set the course for the future. Arlington began to grow as a small rural community supported by this connection.

During the early 1950's and 1960's, Arlington attracted a variety of industries including General Motors and American Can. Many people began to move to Arlington to work for these industries. At this time, the University of Texas at Arlington also began to expand. State Highway 180, or Division Street, joined the railroad as an important link to Dallas and Fort Worth. In the midst of these fundamental changes, Arlington began to develop, growing from a tiny rural community into a small town.

In the early 1960's, the Federal and State governments began to expand the national interstate system. The Texas Turnpike Authority constructed Interstate 30, a major link between the economic centers of Fort Worth and Dallas, and the State of Texas built Interstate 20. The cumulative impact of the construction of these highways served to open up Arlington's access to the Metroplex. Proximity to both of the major cities in the North Central Texas region has been an asset of enormous importance for the City's ongoing development. Arlington attracted Six Flags Over Texas and the Great Southwest Industrial District because of this excellent access.

Just as important, employees of Dallas and Fort Worth, during the 1970s, seeking a home away from the congested urban areas, viewed Arlington as an excellent place to live because of its easy access and quality of life. Arlington began to grow rapidly in a north-south direction, thus connecting a growing urbanized area between Interstate 30 and Interstate 20. The City quickly changed from a small city to a major tourist and distribution center, as well as a major player in the Metroplex.

Today, Arlington is beginning to reach its farthest geographic limits. It is confined to the west by Fort Worth, to the east by Grand Prairie, to the north by Hurst, Euless and Bedford, and to the south by Kennedale and Mansfield.

Neighborhoods in Arlington range from the new developments in the far south of the city to older, more established neighborhoods around Downtown. The challenges facing both extremes are equally significant. In far south Arlington, residents struggle to foster a greater sense of community in their neighborhoods. In the central area, citizens are exploring new ways to keep community pride and spirit strong in their neighborhoods.

I. Introduction

Neighborhoods in Arlington

Understanding Responsibility

Responsibility can be defined in many different ways. Here, we speak of responsibility as it relates to the collective good of the community. Every member of the community is a potential stakeholder in the well-being of the collective. Stakeholders are defined as those individuals and/or entities that have a connection to the area. Most often the connection is economic, but this is not always necessary. Stakeholders have a share or investment in the future of the entity or area under consideration.

The Citizen's Role

The role of the citizen in the health and vitality of a community cannot be understated. All citizens bear the responsibility of a collective quality of life. Active participation in the process is the best way to ensure that the quality of life you expect is realized.

The citizen's involvement can be as little as voting on a regular basis to as large as being elected to serve in a public capacity. Neither of these two examples is better than the other. Both are equally important. All that is important is that you as a citizen participate in the process.

Government's Role

Government's responsibility rests in the preservation and maintenance of an area's quality of life. Government also ensures that the common good is protected and that the decisions that affect the public are carried out in an orderly and efficient manner.

How Government And The Citizen Interact

You, as a resident of a municipal entity, interact with the local government in many different ways. When you pay your utilities, visit a neighborhood park, notify code enforcement, or call the police, you are interacting with your local government. Interaction can be both brief and complex.

Local government provides you with necessary services. These services include police and fire protection, a clean water supply, the proper disposal of waste, maintenance of streets and common areas, etc. These services are provided to you as a citizen and as a tax-payer through fees and property taxes.

I. Introduction

The Role of Community Institutions

Community organizations can be important resources to neighborhoods. These organizations may include the chamber of commerce, school district, social service agencies, civic and fraternal organizations, clubs and religious organizations. Community organizations are potential partners that have a vested interest in seeing your community become strong, just as you do. These organizations have a wealth of resources: human (professional or volunteer), fiscal (funds or in-kind services) or physical (buildings or products), that could be tapped to assist your organization reach its goals.

What Can I Do For My Neighborhood?

The greatest contribution you, as an individual, can make in your neighborhood is to make yourself available. Utilizing your enthusiasm and unique skills for the betterment of your community can be a great personal experience. The amount of time you spend is a very personal decision. However, the old adage that states “a little bit is better than nothing at all” holds true. Decide how much time you have to give and then set about determining on how best to serve your community.

II. Getting Involved

Assessing the Current Situation

The first step in getting involved in your neighborhood is to find out what is going on in your area. Arlington, as a municipal entity, is committed to fostering better informed and more organized neighborhoods. Active citizen participation in municipal government will help continue the City's long-standing commitment to the highest quality of life possible.

Things that you should do to begin getting involved in your community:

- Get to know your neighbors, especially those that are long-standing members of your neighborhood.
- Determine if there is a local neighborhood organization in your area. This organization may be: a neighborhood association, a homeowners association, crime watch, or COP (Citizens on Patrol) group. A neighborhood association is a voluntary group of individuals and organizations (whether homeowners, renters, businesses, churches, etc.) who form a group. A homeowners association is formed by a subdivision developer for the maintenance of common property and to preserve the homeowner's property investment. A crime watch and COPS group is formed with the assistance of the local police department crime prevention unit and is primarily involved with neighborhood crime issues. It seeks active participation of citizens in addressing vandalism, speeding, cut through traffic, garage burglaries, etc.

Each neighborhood organization is unique with varying issues, interests and purposes.



II. Getting Involved

Serve on a committee that addresses an issue that interests or concerns you. Work with your neighbors on both the pressing and ongoing items. Be prepared to provide ideas and input into program and policy for the community's well being. Here are some suggestions to build your personal credibility and stature in your neighborhood association:

- **Talk and listen to your neighbors.** Learning to listen to your neighbors will help you make better decisions on behalf of the group.
- **Follow the organization's bylaws in good faith.** The bylaws are the rules and regulations that govern your organization; it is important that you as a member do not knowingly violate them.
- **Be thoughtful and considerate with all of your decisions that are taken on behalf of the organization.** Make them based on the merit of the arguments, not on personalities or inappropriate pressure.
- **Take advantage of any training offered to develop your skills as a community or neighborhood leader.** Many employers provide opportunities for training that may be directly applicable to the work you are doing in your neighborhood. The City's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives also offers an annual leadership training. Take advantage of these resources whenever possible.
- **Try to help with as many projects as you can.** Make yourself available to help, even if your time is limited.
- **Respect your neighbors, their ideas:** Neighbors who know and respect each other are a more cohesive, successful neighborhood.
- **Be assertive about your opinions and thoughts.** However, be careful not to come across as overbearing. Use whatever communication tools are most comfortable to you. If you are comfortable in your presentation, your audience will listen more intently to what you are saying.
- **Always make a special effort to welcome others into the group.** Mentor new members and help make them comfortable.
- **Be creative and celebrate your successes and accomplishments.** Even when the successes are small, they need to be recognized. This will improve the group's morale and energy level.
- **Consider running for a board or chair position when you are ready.** Quality leadership is crucial to the long-term health of the organization.
- **After establishing yourself as a positive force in your neighborhood, consider running for public office.** This will allow you to share your good community-building skills with the larger community.

II. Getting Involved

Starting Your Own Neighborhood Association

If you are organizing a new area or resurrecting an existing neighborhood organization, try to apply the following suggestions:



Define your neighborhood boundaries. Where does your neighborhood end and adjacent areas of town begin? What are the major streets, highways, parks, or railroads that define the boundaries of your neighborhood? What are the boundaries of nearby neighborhood associations? It is important to prevent overlapping boundaries when you define your area. The City of Arlington's Neighborhood Services Department can help you in this endeavor.

One square mile is generally accepted as good average size for a newly forming neighborhood association. However, this is a guideline and should not be held as a requirement. In any case, try to keep your association's boundaries close to this standard for the sake of efficiency and cohesiveness.



Become familiar with the elements that make up your neighborhood. Look around your neighborhood and talk to people. Determine the assets your community has, as well as needs that exist. Think about projects that will utilize these assets while addressing needs. Create a potential list of things you can do and a number of people who will be willing to help.



Identify the “assets” of your neighborhood:

- What is the history of your area or neighborhood association? Try to build on the successes of the past. Also try to focus on the strengths of your neighborhood as you define them.
- Who are the “natural” neighborhood leaders? They are the people that usually know what is going on or have been in the neighborhood for many years. “Natural” leaders are people who are outspoken, concerned, or articulate about neighborhood problems. Generally, this group will include clergy members, bankers, PTA members, business people or people who have never before been in leadership positions, yet are highly respected. Be sure to get their names, addresses and telephone numbers as a future resource.
- What institutions and business groups exist in your neighborhood? What similar problems concern the businesses as well as residents of your area? Businesses can provide a valuable resource when attempting to get a new organization up and running.

II. Getting Involved



Consider conducting an assessment: A survey, as a formal assessment of your neighborhood, can help you decide what issues need attention. Often needs assessments can be conducted or planned at your first meeting. Your group will want to decide whether a door-to-door survey or a more extensive process should be utilized. Some questions to be addressed in your assessment include:

- Do neighbors know each other and communicate regularly?
- Are the streets and/or alleys littered? Are they adequately lit?
- What transportation challenges exist, such as dangerous intersections, speeding traffic or heavily congested areas?
- Are there any abandoned structures or vacant lots in the area?
- What are the needs of the small business owners in your area?
- Is there an ongoing issue with land use or zoning?
- Often crisis discussions are the most common cause for organizing because it presents a direct threat to personal interest. Utilize this potential response to get people involved quickly.



Talk to your neighbors. Talk to people about your concerns. Find people on your block, in churches, synagogues, at the schools, at shopping centers, and in stores. For many people this is a difficult first step. *Do not be afraid or embarrassed.* Most people would love an opportunity to talk about the issues they see in their neighborhood. On rare occasions, you may find someone who is not interested in talking. If that is the case, thank them anyway and find someone else who is eager to talk to you.

- When you approach neighbors, begin by telling them your ideas about developing a neighborhood association or issues for the association to tackle. Most people will have ideas and opinions on how to make this happen in your area.
- Explain your ideas and beliefs on:
 - the need for a neighborhood association (i.e., transportation issues, crime prevention).
 - why a neighborhood association is a good thing for your community (the benefits of many people working together).
- Ask them if they are interested in getting involved. What are some of the issues they see in the area that a new neighborhood association could address?

II. Getting Involved

- Exchange names and numbers. Become organized by keeping a notebook with names and addresses. Organization will be crucial for the long-term health of the organization.
- If residents are interested, tell them that you will call soon about a meeting to discuss their ideas with other neighbors.
- Notify residents of a meeting within a month. It is important that you stick to this time frame. If you wait too long, people could lose their enthusiasm and they may perceive your efforts as just “talk.”



Organize small groups together around similar issues to discuss common concerns. You should not organize or reactivate a neighborhood association alone. Assemble a core group of people who will be the organizing committee. With this group, decide on issues that are most pressing, most extensive and the most easily solved. Discuss the need for an organized group to deal with these problems. Also, talk about how to get other people involved. Once you have a small group, set a date to meet. This is the beginning of your neighborhood association.



Hold an organizing committee meeting.

- Now that you have a core group together, plan for a first meeting.
 - Plan a strategy for getting people to attend the first meeting.
 - Determine how to present the issues as this group sees them.
 - Discuss the need to organize a neighborhood group.
 - Talk about what your group hopes to accomplish.
- Decide what you will discuss at the meeting as well as a strategy for getting people to come. Many types of publicity can draw residents, including flyers, volunteers going door to door, and newsletters. Door prizes and pot luck dinners can also draw residents and make the meeting fun. Crisis can also draw a crowd. At the first general meeting there will be people with different ideas. To be a successful neighborhood association, you must be open to all people and their concerns.

II. Getting Involved



Plan the first meeting. The outline below may assist you in planning your first meeting. Encourage residents to take on tasks and make each task's responsibilities clear to the person(s) responsible. At the conclusion of your meeting, review who has been assigned each job. Make sure that everyone understands what needs to be done. When you hold that first meeting, it is important that it be well organized and run smoothly. A well-run meeting is the beginning of a successful neighborhood association.

- **Determine what kinds of things you want to discuss with the larger group.** At your planning meeting discuss with the group your ideas for starting a neighborhood association. Allow time for all the neighbors at this meeting to share their thoughts. Also at this planning meeting discuss how you will present your ideas to the larger group at your first general meeting. How can you encourage your neighbors to attend the general meeting and provide input and share ideas? You might include the following questions for your group to discuss:

- Why do you need to organize a neighborhood association?
- What are some of the common problems in your neighborhood that you think a neighborhood association can help solve?
- If there is a major issue or a crisis situation, explain the situation to the attendees. What are the issues involved? How might they affect the health or livability of your neighborhood? What are some strategies your neighborhood can use to address the problem as identified?
- What other things do residents want the neighborhood association to accomplish?

- **Finding a place to hold the meeting.** Try to estimate the number of people you expect at your first general meeting and then look for a meeting space to accommodate that number. It is important to keep the meeting place as neutral as possible for all of the attendees expected. Possible sites include:

- Schools, both public and private
- Churches, synagogues, temples, or mosques
- Community colleges or local universities
- Private homes
- Community and recreation centers
- City Hall
- Hospitals
- Non-profit centers

When arranging for a meeting space, ask if there is a cost associated with the use of the facility. Schools and colleges sometimes charge a fee and/or require a permit. You can arrange for usage of the facility through the school's administrator or principal. Be sure that your meeting space can accommodate people with disabilities. If your neighborhood is ethnically diverse you should make an effort to secure translators for those potential attendees.

II. Getting Involved

- **Draft a plan to be inclusive to people and their ideas.** The following are some ideas for discussion:

- 1) What are the roles of the organizers? What roles should the organizational planners take during the first general meeting? They may include facilitating the meeting or presenting several well thought out ideas and projects.
- 2) Encourage active participation from all newcomers and seek out other opinions. Seek input on the ideas as they are presented to the group. This will help the group gain ownership of ideas and strategies as well.

Welcome residents ideas and input. A sense of belonging is crucial in getting the attendees to return and become even more active in the group.

Have something tangible to discuss. A project or issue will provide a focus from which to harness the attendees energy and enthusiasm.

- **The general meeting agenda.** The most important aspect of running a meeting is having a solid, well planned agenda. An agenda is a listing of the topics and the order in which they are to be discussed by the group. Decide at the planning meeting who will draft and reproduce the agenda. Remember to collect the names and addresses of those in attendance. Set a date for your next meeting.

Your agenda should include the following items:

- **Introductions of all people present.** It may also benefit the group for each individual to identify their address and association with your neighborhood.
- **The purpose of the meeting.** It's important that you explain why you are interested in forming a neighborhood association to the attendees.
- **Areas of concern or importance to the members of the planning committee.** This will provide a staging area for discussion by all of the citizens in attendance. Be careful not to appear as "lecturing" to the attendees. This will turn them off from the entire process.

Set aside ample time for socializing. This can occur at either the beginning or the end of the meeting. You could prepare several "ice-breaker" exercises to help the attendees mix more freely.

II. Getting Involved

Developing and Maintaining a Neighborhood Association

- **Publicize your meeting.** The best-planned meeting can be successful only if you have people in attendance. The way to get people to attend your meeting is to publicize. Just remember to include all pertinent information in your publicity. Remember to answer the questions of what, where, when and why. If possible, include a phone number for people who have questions about the meeting or are interested in future meetings but cannot make the first meeting.

● **Staging your first neighborhood meeting.** The original planning meeting was only a stepping stone to this meeting. Now is the time for your dreams and hard work to become reality. The first meeting will be one of the most important meetings for your new group.

- **Publicize the meeting.** Use flyers, newspaper announcements, or feature articles to draw attention to the problem and the reason for the meeting. If possible, organize a group of volunteer to walk door-to-door to meet residents and invite them to the meeting.
- **Contact elected officials.** Invite your elected officials, neighborhood services staff and crime prevention organizers to the meeting to explain what services are available to organized neighborhoods and to share suggestions for working together successfully.
- **Establish minutes for all meetings.** Decide who among your group will take the minutes.
 - A copy of the minutes of all meetings should be kept. Generally, the organization's secretary should handle this task.
 - A summary of the first meeting could be later used as a handout or as the basis of a neighborhood newsletter. Take every effort to show that each attendee's input was heard and recorded.
- **Arrange for outside speakers if necessary.** Local speakers are readily available to come to your neighborhood association upon request. They could be active members from other neighborhood groups or staff members from the City of Arlington or other community agencies.

The decision to invite a speaker is up to the organizational planners. A speaker may be a good addition to a meeting involving a particular issue, or to get more neighbors interested in meetings.

- **Getting people excited and involved.** As the organizer of the first meeting, you should try to make people feel as comfortable as possible. When people feel needed, they are more likely to work with the neighborhood association.

II. Getting Involved

- **Set up the next meeting:** Don't let people leave one meeting without knowing about the next meeting. Decide:

- When will it be held?
- Where?
- How will it be advertised?

- **Expand and develop your new organization.** Write bylaws, elect officers, and develop an action plan. This includes all the technical and legal areas of concern to neighborhood associations. Do not get overwhelmed with the bureaucratic business of your new organization. A committee can be organized to help do the work. Your group may actually have members who do this professionally and would be able to get the tasks done in no time.
- **Building coalitions with other groups.** A successful neighborhood association should seek out and foster positive relationships with existing neighborhood organizations. Do not duplicate efforts or services. Be sure to get your neighborhood association to support other groups when your group's interests are being served as well. This will provide you with a broad base of neighborhood support that you will need to be successful over the long-term.

Many issues that your neighborhood is experiencing may be regional or city-wide issues. Work together to ensure that your neighborhood's goals will not conflict with another's or with any existing City of Arlington policies.

Make an effort to form alliances with the business owners and associations in your area. Consider inviting them to join your neighborhood association as active members. Neighborhood businesses can provide an invaluable economic resource for the organization.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Developing and Maintaining a Neighborhood Association

People involved in neighborhood associations carry out a wide variety of activities together. To more effectively focus on improving the livability of your neighborhood, it is often necessary to develop and maintain a healthy neighborhood organization.

Several sections of this handbook address the formal structure of your organization, and others provide tips on how individuals can get involved in the building process. This section will provide assistance on how to keep your organization strong through the various cycles of involvement over the years. These pages are not intended to be an exhaustive list or a rigid how-to manual; rather, consider them as helpful hints or pointers. Keeping this in mind, use what works for you and your neighborhood.

Please keep in mind that the city of Arlington's Neighborhood Services staff is available for support and assistance to you in your efforts. However, your neighborhood association is an independent and autonomous group. Residents who live or own property in the neighborhood are responsible for charting the course for the neighborhood association, including selecting leadership and determining group activities. The association will be as strong and effective as the people committed to running it. Making the association as strong and viable as possible will insure its long-term success.

Meetings are one of the most common neighborhood association activities. In fact, this will be your opportunity to share ideas, desires and concerns with the other members of your neighborhood. The importance of well-run meetings cannot be overstated. This section provides information about how to run effective meetings.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

In addition to well-run meetings, there are also other activities that are important:

- **Recruit enthusiastic and strong leadership for your group.** The personality and character of the Chair or President of your organization is very important to the future of your group. The individual should be strong and outgoing, and committed to making a difference in the neighborhood.
- **Commit to be inclusive of all members in your neighborhood.** It is vital that your neighborhood welcomes new members and includes as many residents as possible in all association activities.
- **Celebrate the diversity of your neighborhood.** Make goals to add a certain number of new people each year, and make a special effort to recruit those who have not historically participated or are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. See the sections on recruiting new members, how to keep them, and how to work with volunteers.
- **Develop a work program for the organization.** Map out what you would like to accomplish over the next year. A little planning can go a long way to holding your organization together. It will also provide focus for the entire group.
- **Utilize as many creative approaches and ideas as you can.** Organize event to include people who do not or would not usually attend neighborhood meetings or events. A good way to start the neighborhood association off is to have a “block party.” Partner with businesses, other community organizations, and governmental entities. Raise money for a project to benefit the community. Brainstorm within your group about other creative ways to get additional people involved. Share your ideas with other neighborhoods and copy other successful efforts.
- **Create an identity for your neighborhood.** Produce signs, fliers, and events that publicize your area. Ask local businesses to refer to the neighborhood in their advertisements. Make every attempt to include the non-residential members of your neighborhood. Businesses are excellent potential members.
- **Set benchmarks at regular intervals to evaluate your neighborhood’s progress.** Discuss what has worked and what hasn’t been successful. Constructive praise and criticism can help the association put successes in perspective.
- **Remember to have fun and enjoy yourself.** Celebrate the neighborhood accomplishments as opportunities arise. Create traditions and celebrations for the neighborhood association. These will help to build community spirit. Activities that are fun will keep people interested in your organization. A good way to make your activities fun is to involve children and senior citizens.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Electing Your Leaders

Once an initial core group in your neighborhood has been identified, the group should elect a short-term leader. Try to postpone electing a permanent leader until you have established a large membership. This will prevent the appearance that the group is “cliquish.”

As your neighborhood association builds membership, the newly organized membership will need to choose permanent leaders that are elected to official terms. The more inclusive the group is at this stage, the stronger your group will be over the long-term.

Your association’s by-laws should include provisions for electing a board of officers and describe what those positions will be, how often they are elected, and the major responsibilities for the positions. Leaders provide continuity and accountability for the organization. Help each other become effective leaders and officers as you develop your association. Support will be your strongest contribution to the betterment of the neighborhood. In addition, you may want to seek out leadership training. Training of this type is available from Leadership Arlington, the City of Arlington Neighborhood Academy, and several other organizations that are devoted to community leadership.



III. Creating a Sense of Community

The Seven Major Neighborhood Association Board Responsibilities

by Arty Trost, Consultant, Organizational Dynamics

- 1. Planning for the organization:** Where will it go, what will it do, how to accomplish goals.
- 2. Organizing the association:** Who will do what, what resources will be needed.
- 3. Directing** the efforts of the volunteers.
- 4. Evaluating** the work as well as the association.
- 5. Neighborhood communication:** be responsive to your neighborhood, seek input from people who aren't involved in the association, keep people informed about what the association is doing.
- 6. Resource development:** Identify and solicit resources: active members, financial support, meeting space, supplies, etc.
- 7. Leadership and member development:** recruit and train people to assume leadership responsibilities, help leaders and members to work effectively.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Neighborhood Association Board Positions

Board Members It is very important for your neighborhood association to remain as inclusive as possible. Toward that effort, any person who is a resident or property owner within the neighborhood association boundaries, or who meets the criteria as set forth in your association's by-laws, is a prospective member and will be able to participate in your association.

Elections should be held annually for your neighborhood association to select a Board of Directors. These officers will handle the business of the neighborhood association throughout the upcoming year. Your association's bylaws should specify the positions and the general framework of your electoral process. The "job" descriptions outline the responsibilities of the board and other individual officer positions.

General Board Representation

It is important that there are enough members on the board of your organization that can carry out the duties and responsibilities that will be required of the committee. The governing board of your association should, at a minimum, include the following positions:

- **Chairperson or President**

Responsible for the overall leadership of the board. Sets the agenda and facilitates all meetings.

- **Vice Chairperson or Vice President**

Assists the chairperson. In the absence of the chairperson, the vice chairperson conducts the meetings and exercises all of the usual duties of the chairperson.

- **Secretary**

Records the minutes of the meetings and makes sure that copies of the minutes, agendas, and other records are available for the board and public.

- **Treasurer**

Responsible for the funds of the neighborhood association. Most boards only require an occasional status report from the Treasurer.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Auxilliary Positions and Chairs

Each neighborhood association is different and will need unique committees to address issues in the neighborhood. Some of the more common positions are as follows:

- **Crime Prevention/Public Safety Chair**

This job usually involves working with the Crime Prevention and Crime Watch sections of the Arlington Police Department. It is also the responsibility of this position to act as a liaison between the block captains of the active Crime Watch groups in the neighborhood and the Board of the association.

- **Publicity Chair and/or Newsletter Editor**

A newsletter can keep residents informed about issues in the neighborhood. This person has overall responsibility for overseeing production and distribution of the association's newsletter.

- **Events Chair**

The events chair would be responsible for coordinating neighborhood events, such as cleanups, July 4 parade and Easter egg hunts. The possibilities for types of events are endless.

- **Land Use Chair**

The land use chair position exists to keep the association informed on any land use and zoning matters that may potentially affect the neighborhood. All information gathered by the person in this position should be shared with the entire membership in order to ensure neighborhood involvement in land use cases.

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Developing a Work Plan for Your Group

Work plans allow you to establish the upcoming goals for the group. Meeting goals, planning events, recruiting volunteers, and strengthening the organization will be easier if the neighborhood association takes some time to outline goals and objectives and makes a plan for accomplishing them.

You should also make a work plan for individual projects to help everyone stay focused and on target. Here are some questions to answer in developing a work plan:

- What is the purpose of this project? If this is an annual work plan, review the purpose of the organization, then define goals for the year.
- What resources will be required to accomplish this project?
- What resources are available to help the neighborhood association meet these goals?
- Has any other neighborhood association tried this activity? Can they be contacted for help?
- What are the tasks involved for the project?
- Who will do the tasks?
- How much time will be needed?
- Does the association have the funds? Can you raise the needed money?
- When can the resources be secured?
- Are enough members or volunteers available to complete the project?

Assistance is available in the Department of Neighborhood Services at (817) 459-6250, which is located on the third floor of City Hall, 101 West Abram Street. City staff is here to help you realize your group's neighborhood goals.

The importance of a work program cannot be understated. Be realistic in setting goals and before you know it your efforts will be rewarded!

III. Creating a Sense of Community

Evaluation of the Direction and Purpose of the Association

Reviewing on a regular basis your organization's purpose and focus will help the organization remain strong and effective in the neighborhood. The following are items to keep in mind when evaluating the progress of your organization.

- Regularly review and assess the purpose of the neighborhood association and its priorities.
- Develop realistic plans and activities for the entire group.
- Make every attempt to ensure that the leadership or Board is as representative of the entire neighborhood.
- Continuously maintain ongoing communication with all of the residents of your neighborhood, whether or not they are members. With enough positive communication, you will eventually attract many of these residents to your group.
- Foster actions and events that enhance interaction between residents. This should be an ongoing goal of the organization.
- Attempt to solve problems before they become crises. Deal with crises as they arise in a prompt and efficient manner.
- Recognize and celebrate successes at every possible occasion.

Every organization experiences growing pains throughout its existence. Do not get discouraged if your association is struggling. It is important to have an organized process for resolving issues, but your group should not spend all its time and energy on organizational problems. Build credibility and success one issue at a time, and the overall participation will grow.

IV. Officers & General Membership

The Chairperson

Every meeting needs someone to act as the facilitator. This person is crucial to the success of the overall meeting and for the long-term health of the organization. Usually the chairperson of the meeting is the neighborhood association president or its highest-ranking officer present, but sometimes other residents may chair a committee or task force. It is important that the person be able to be objective.

The chairperson never monopolizes the floor or dominates the discussions. The chair keeps the meeting running smoothly while allowing participation and makes sure people keep to the agenda, both in content and timing.

The following is a list of duties that are usually the responsibility of the chairperson:

- Representing the association in a public capacity.
- Scheduling and facilitating meetings on behalf of the membership.
- Making sure the membership is notified about meeting dates and times.
- Encouraging and ensuring participation from everyone.
- Keeping the meeting focused and within the allotted time frames as outlined in the agenda.
- Mediating disagreements among residents when they arise.
- Bringing the issues to a vote as needed and in an orderly manner.
- Clarifying decisions made by the groups.
- Reviewing tasks and making assignments.
- Having an organized agenda.
- Knowing the organization's bylaws and *Robert's Rules of Order* meeting processes.
- Ensuring that all members follow bylaws and procedures.
- Following-up on decisions made at the meeting.
- Understanding, promoting, supporting, and interpreting the overall goals of the organization as well as the role of the Board or Executive Committee.
- Consulting the Executive Committee and past chairpersons in recruiting new committee members. Asking people to serve on committees and outlining their responsibilities.
- Being knowledgeable about the budget allotments (if applicable).
- Observing correct procedure for correspondence, both internally and externally.
- Seeing that meeting proceedings are recorded.
- Giving credit and recognition for accomplishments.
- Meeting with your successor and transferring records, files, etc.

IV. Officers & General Membership

Tips that Make a Chairperson's Job More Manageable

- 1.) Introduce yourself at the beginning of a meeting. Don't assume people know who you are. If there is time and the group is a reasonable size, have the others introduce themselves as well.
- 2.) Review the agenda and establish ground rules. Take a vote on accepting the agenda as read.
- 3.) Direct the discussion. Keep people on the topic. When issues are brought up that are not on the agenda, remind the group that there will be a time for new business at the end of the meeting. If people are repetitive, restate the information that they have shared and move on to the next speaker. If a decision needs to be made, call for a motion and take a vote.
- 4.) Facilitate voting and decision making.
- 5.) Allow everyone an opportunity to speak. A chairperson facilitates discussion and should remain neutral. If you want to speak, you may call on yourself, temporarily step out of your role as the chair, and then voice your opinion. Upon completion, return to your role as the chairperson.
- 6.) Disagreement between the membership is inevitable. Mediate these discussions when they arise. Remain impartial and fair. Give each person an opportunity to state his or her point of view.
- 7.) Publicly state in review what has to be done. Review all discussions, decisions made, and the tasks to be assigned. Make sure that people leave the meeting with a clear understanding of what decisions have been made and which tasks are to be done by whom.
- 8.) Make every attempt to be as organized as possible. Use a watch and follow the agenda. When it is time to end a discussion, announce that time is almost complete. Select the final speakers and their order from those still indicating a desire to speak.
- 9.) Encourage others to take on tasks and duties. Be aware that you cannot do everything on your own.
- 10.) Follow-up on the assignments after the meeting to encourage members to get things done and help when necessary. Providing positive reinforcement helps motivate people to continue in their tasks.

IV. Officers & General Membership

The Vice Chairperson The Vice Chair will serve in an advisory capacity to the Chair of your association. It is also the duty of the Vice Chair to fill in for the Chair when that person is unable to fulfill his or her duties. The Vice Chair should also be a person that has strong leadership qualities.

Some of the responsibilities typically associated with the Vice Chair include:

- Manage and facilitate a meeting in the absence of the Chair.
- Follow-up on tasks assigned to members of the association.
- Step into the Chair position in the event that the Chair is unable to complete his or her term.
- Manage the actions and progress of committees.

The Secretary The Secretary should be detail-oriented and have strong skills in writing.

The Secretary of your neighborhood association should be responsible for:

- Recording of the minutes during all association meetings.
- Recording all of the official correspondence of the association.
- Maintaining current and comprehensive membership records.
- Establishing a close working relationship with the association's newsletter editor for the adequate dispersion of information to all members.

IV. Officers & General Membership

The Treasurer The Treasurer of your association should be a detail-oriented person who enjoys working with numbers. The fiscal condition of your association is crucial to the long-term health of your group. Select someone that will take on the duties of the position with serious commitment.

The Treasurer of a neighborhood association normally will be responsible for:

- Maintenance of an adequate and thorough financial accounting system for the association.
- Paying of all of the association's expenses in a timely and accurate manner.
- Collecting and depositing all of the funds received by the association.
- Sound management of all of the association's financial assets.



IV. Officers & General Membership

Building a Membership

Neighborhood groups may initially attract members through well-publicized meetings on issues that concern projects that involve many people. If your group is in the public eye, it will certainly boost membership. Be innovative in publicity efforts.

Finding new members is crucial to keep neighborhood associations alive. While many people appreciate what the group is doing for their neighborhood, they may not attend meetings or even come in direct contact with your neighborhood association.

Neighborhood associations sometimes inadvertently restrict their numbers by having membership forms and sign up sheets only at meetings. In order to maximize your membership potential, the group should keep the neighborhood association at the forefront of the citizens' minds. Undertake a membership drive that directly reaches every household within your boundaries at least annually.

Actions to Take to Build Your Association's Membership

- 1.) Have association members go door-to-door calling on their neighbors. This can be a week-long effort or a one day blitz. Consider having a membership drive and then sponsoring a party for the members that volunteered. The party would then allow them to have fun and share experiences later that same day.
- 2.) Supply members with printed materials to encourage the residents to get involved. This can be as simple as a brochure or letter from the president of the association that explains your particular neighborhood association and details any upcoming events or issues. Also, members should carry membership forms with them and offer both immediate and mail-in membership opportunities.
- 3.) Develop a block captain network as a foundation for a membership campaign as well as other activities. Block captains can pass out flyers and newsletters to prospective new members, welcome new residents, and serve as a conduit for specific problems on the block, and place volunteers in touch with persons responsible for activities for which they might be interested. Include any Crime Watch groups.
- 4.) Prospective new members can also be recruited at other events or community gatherings. Sponsor a booth at a community festival or event. This is a great opportunity to talk to people in your area. Remember, have information and membership sign-up sheets at your booth. It is also a good idea to put together an informational packet to hand out at events.

IV. Officers & General Membership

Keeping New Members

Recruiting new members to the group is only half the battle. The other half is keeping them involved in your organization. For every member who is active in the association, there are probably two who would be involved if they were properly motivated or enticed. The following are ideas to keep in mind as you recruit new members.

Keeping New Members Involved and Productive

- 1.) **Help new members find a place in the association.** Not everyone is a self-starter. Many will offer to help but have no idea where to begin. Develop a list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment for each task. This will be a great start for your new members.
- 2.) **Always welcome new people and attempt to make them feel at ease with the group.** Officers and board members should watch for new faces at each meeting and welcome them enthusiastically. Each new or potential member should be introduced to someone who lives near them or shares a similar interest. Designate an official “greeter” at every meeting.
- 3.) **Appoint people who are not part of the core group to positions of leadership.** Sensitivity to this issue is central to creating a sense of belonging among group members.
- 4.) **Encourage new ideas and input in all levels of the organization.** People coming into a situation for the first time are often able to see things in a new light and can offer new solutions to old problems. They just might have the answer that you have been seeking. New perspectives can assist the whole group in problem solving.
- 5.) **Every meeting should exemplify the strongest commitment to organization.** Organization will endow the association with a sense of accomplishment from the outset. Create a written agenda before each meeting and stick to it.
- 6.) **Maintain current membership records.** Keep a file that lists members’ names, addresses, phone numbers, family member names, occupations, special talents, concerns, areas of interest, etc.
- 7.) **Enjoy yourself and have fun.** The work of the neighborhood association should not be boring drudgery. Sponsor parties and celebrations to get to know your neighbors better. Have events that appeal to all, including children. This will foster a strong sense of community spirit among your neighbors.

IV. Officers & General Membership

When Working With Volunteers

When Working with Volunteers

The following section will provide you with basic elements of how to manage your group's volunteers in an efficient manner. Approach this task with purpose and commitment and your group will benefit greatly. The following are some tips for working with volunteers:

- Make every member feel like they are a valued member of the neighborhood.
- Involve every member in every step of organizing.
- Actively seek the input of your fellow members. Cooperation will help you accomplish your task as well as the group's sense of identity.
- Invite all stakeholders, including businesses, within the boundaries of your neighborhood to be an active part of the group.
- Try to be realistic about what your neighborhood association can accomplish.
 - How much time is needed to complete the project(s)?
 - How many people are needed for this project(s)?
 - What other projects are underway? Is it feasible for the association to take on new responsibility?
- Bring all activities to discussion and vote before the full membership before committing the entire group to a new project.
- Do not become discouraged with new members that are not as excited or eager as you are about the association. It is impossible for each and every member to be at the same level of enthusiasm.
- Be inclusive — encouraging input for decision-making.
- Encourage others to take on tasks.
- Carefully consider doing projects. Make sure the entire membership knows why a particular project is being dropped from the group's agenda.
- Assure volunteers that they are not being asked to volunteer for "life." Any effort they put in is valuable to the organization.

IV. Officers & General Membership

Burnout

Your association's volunteers are your greatest resource. These are the members that will make things happen for the benefit of the entire neighborhood. Volunteers are very special people who give their time and energy without receiving any monetary compensation for their efforts. However, without a paycheck or any other form of compensation to keep someone coming to meetings week after week, there must be other enticements to accomplish this goal.

Volunteers remain active with organizations when they feel they are contributing positively to the efforts of the organization. In addition, volunteers also remain active when they are recognized for the effort they make within that organization. Positive reinforcement is crucial to keeping these members active in your organization.

When volunteers no longer feel appreciated, they become very susceptible to "burn-out." Burnout is when volunteers feel like all of their efforts are in vain or they may also perceive that they are the only members doing any work.

To prevent volunteer burnout, the positive feeling one has must remain high in spite of the many hours devoted to the work involved. This is especially true in neighborhood associations that often demand great commitment from their members. The following discussions will provide insight into the causes of volunteer burnout and ways to prevent your association members from succumbing.

Why Do Volunteers Burn Out?

The following causes are just a few of the reasons why volunteers burn out. Your association should strive to be sensitive to these concerns.

- The organization is lacking in clear goals and direction. Strong leadership is important to volunteers.
- The sheer number of tasks seems overwhelming. There is too much work to be done. Members are afraid to say "no," thinking that tasks will not get done if they do not volunteer to do them.
- People take the entire responsibility for the association personally. There is a popular notion that if you work for a public interest organization (i.e., your neighborhood association), you have to give selflessly for the cause. People see it as a measure of their self-worth.
- Volunteers feel unappreciated. There are often too few rewards or positive recognition opportunities for the group's successes.
- There are too few fun events organized by the association. All work and no play makes everyone tired and burned out!
- A general lack of members. The perception will be that there are too few people are involved.
- A volunteer may be focused on a singular task for a long period of time. New volunteers should constantly be recruited to take on tasks.

IV. Officers & General Membership

Preventing Volunteer Bunout

Prevention is best objective when dealing with volunteer burnout. Keep the following objectives in mind when you work with your volunteers:

- **Attempt to set realistic objectives that meet the association's purpose and goals.** It helps to have job descriptions or task outlines so people know what they are getting themselves into and what is expected of them in the job.
- **Different people are able to handle different amounts and types of work.** Recognize different abilities and tolerance levels in handing out work assignments. Always strive to recruit new members.
- **Remind people that the quality of their work is what's important, not the quantity.** The more active volunteers the group has the better the work will be distributed.
- **Regardless of how small the achievement, recognize people for a job well done on every occasion.** You can verbally give thanks to people at meetings or develop an award system. This could be a certificate of appreciation, a gift given to a member who has worked hard for the group, or an annual award potluck dinner where members are publicly recognized. Nominate volunteers for recognition by the community on a regular basis.
- **After a particularly hard project has been completed, organize fun events for your members.** Creating a social network of friends and neighbors can provide support and also give people an opportunity to have a good time together. Recreational neighborhood events should be a regular project for the association. You might consider creating a committee for this purpose.

V. Your Association's Meetings

Making Your Meetings the Best

How your association conducts its meetings will attract more potential members if it is done right. There are a lot of things one can do to make a meeting more efficient and productive. The following is a checklist to foster a better meeting for your group.

Making Your Meetings the Best

- 1) Select a "neutral" place to meet.
- 2) Plan your meeting.
- 3) Always start on time.
- 4) State the purpose of your meeting clearly on the agenda.
- 5) State ideas positively and show their relation to the overall issue.
- 6) Watch the general flow of the meeting - keep it moving as need warrants.
- 7) Find background information ahead of time or invite resource people to come to the meeting.
- 8) Encourage everyone to contribute.
- 9) Encourage people to voice their opinions by questioning or restating as you go along.
- 10) Make frequent summaries during the discussion.
- 11) Attempt to stress cooperation, not conflict.
- 12) Encourage people to take on tasks and responsibility as the meeting proceeds. Make sure that each assignment is recorded in the minutes.
- 13) Direct the meeting and the attendees from problem to solution after each issue.
- 14) Conclude the meeting.
- 15) Summarize the decisions reached.
- 16) Point out differences not yet resolved.
- 17) Outline future actions, next steps to be taken.
- 18) Set deadlines and review task assignments.
- 19) Set the next meeting date, time, and place.
- 20) Evaluate the meeting.

V. Your Association's Meetings

Elements of Successful Meetings

The ability to express yourself in a clear and concise manner is important. However, listening can be even a more important aspect of communication. The two things you do most at any given meeting are speaking or listening to others speak. Both of these are important skills that everyone involved in the group should master, especially those in leadership positions. They are key elements for successful meetings.

Public Speaking

People who are the most respected members of a group are often the best speakers. They are able to get an idea across to a group of people without dominating the meeting or rambling.

Here are tips to help you improve your speaking ability:

- **Know what you want to say.** The secret to being a good speaker, whether it is part of an on-the-spot group discussion or a prepared speech, is knowing the point you want to convey. Clearly outline your ideas before you speak. Jot down your main points on a piece of paper. Use the outline as a guide to help you be more focused.
- **Keep it short.** No matter what kind of speech you are making, keep it short and to the point.
- **Speak clearly and project your voice outward.** Do not mumble. Speak strongly and with confidence. If you believe in yourself, others will too.
- **Practice your speech.** If you have to make a presentation to the group, try practicing it in front of your mirror at home before the meeting.
- **Be concise.** Focus on one or two central ideas in your speech, and look directly at the audience.
- **Avoid distractions.** Avoid words like “um,” “ah,” “kinda,” and “you know.” Also, avoid physical distractions like playing with your hair or glasses, or jingling your keys.

V. Your Association's Meetings

Listening to Others A successful neighborhood organizer and activist knows how to really listen to others' concerns – not just the words being spoken, but what those words mean. This is a skill that takes practice and hard work. The guidelines below may help you to improve your listening skills.

Things to do while you are listening:

- ***Listen for the unfamiliar.***
- ***Learn to concentrate.***
- ***Rephrase important points in your own words.*** This will allow the speaker the opportunity to clarify the statement if there has been a misunderstanding.
- ***Pay attention to details.*** Details are important in communication, especially if the membership differs significantly on the issue.
- ***Be open-minded about new ideas and opinions.***
- ***Allow speakers to complete their ideas or opinions without interruption.***
- ***If you are not clear on terms being used, ask the speaker to define them.***
- ***Ask clarifying questions such as:***
 - “Do you mean...?”
 - “Are you saying that ...?”
 - “Could you be more specific ...?”

V. Your Association's Meetings

Conducting Successful Meetings

Successful meetings involve preparation before the meeting begins and follow-up once the meeting has been concluded. The following lists may provide you tips on conducting successful meetings.



Before The Meeting

- **Set attainable goals.** With the people on your planning committee, determine what you want to accomplish during the meeting. The agenda should serve as a “plan” for how your meeting will be run and what will be covered.
- **Review the minutes of your last meeting.** When reviewing the items, ask the following questions:
 - Who was assigned which task?
 - Are they prepared to make a report on their assignment?
 - Where should they be on the agenda?
 - How much time do they need for their presentation?
 - What issues were left unresolved?
 - On what issues are you now prepared to make decisions?
- **Gather all pertinent information.** Collect all new information that has been received by the committee. Put this in outline form so all committee members□□□□ have the information in front of them during the meeting.
- **Resources and information.** Be sure to make this information clear and concise. When advertising your meeting, be sure to include the date, time, place, and purpose on all materials.
- **Design and draft an agenda.**
 - Write the agenda before the meeting. Make changes only with the consent of the group.
 - Make enough copies for all attending the meeting. Make extras for those that may attend who were unexpected.
 - Set a predetermined beginning and ending time and stick to it. All attending members will appreciate punctuality.
 - Set a timed agenda to get through all of the information on your agenda.

V. Your Association's Meetings



During The Meeting

Adhering to established rules helps all attendees benefit from your association's meeting. The following list identifies things that your membership should always keep in mind while your meeting is being conducted:

- Keep information items brief and relevant.
- Discuss decision items at a time when most members are present. Generally, this is in the body or middle of the meeting.
- Know the limits of the group's decision-making authority.
- Committee reports should recommend action with clearly stated proposals.
- Present financial information with written copies for everyone present.
- Involve everyone who attends the meeting. Have newcomers introduce themselves before they speak, or introduce everyone at the beginning of the meeting.
- Use visual aids as much as possible. This includes charts, graphs, posters, etc. Visual aids give groups something to focus on during a discussion.
- Establish the next meeting time and place. People should walk away from the meeting knowing when and where they will meet next.
- Hand out new task assignments. Be clear about who is doing what and what is expected of that person.
- Allow time for new business so that all participants have an opportunity to bring up issues that have not already been covered by the agenda.
- Minutes should be taken at all meetings and should always include:
 - The persons attending and their capacity.
 - A summary of all items presented and discussed and the action to be taken.
 - A record of all decisions made, including a record of votes taken.
 - The votes on plans made, tasks assigned, etc.
 - All items which are referred to committees or to future meetings.

Minutes should be kept on file with your association's secretary and must be available to anyone requesting them.

V. Your Association's Meetings

Parliamentary Procedure for Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order is the standard resource for facilitating discussion and decision making among members of a group. Robert's Rules outlines and defines the rules of parliamentary procedure. Copies of the rules are available at most libraries and bookstores. Although they may seem long and involved, having an agreed-upon set of rules makes meetings run smoother.

Following Robert's Rules of Order will help your group conduct better meetings. Your group is free to modify them to find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise. Most organizations adopt Robert's Rules of Order as their standard rules of meeting.

Presented as follows are the basic elements of *Robert's Rules* as utilized by most organizations:

I. Make a Motion. To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a group member ("I move that..."). A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it."). After limited discussion the group then votes on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your bylaws).

II. To Postpone an Item Indefinitely. This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed the motion cannot be reintroduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.

III. To Amend a Motion. This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.

IV. To Commit a Motion. This action is used to place a motion in committee. It requires a second. A majority vote must rule to carry it. At the next meeting the committee is required to prepare a report on the motion committed. If an appropriate committee exists, the motion goes to that committee. If not, a new committee is established.

V. To Call for the Question. To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call for the question") and the action needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further questioning is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.

V. Your Association's Meetings

VI. To Table a Discussion. To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time (“I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.”) A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item under discussion.

VII. To Adjourn a Meeting. A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

NOTE: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent motion takes precedence over the ones preceding it. For example, if #6, a motion to table the discussion, is proposed, it must be voted on before #3, a motion to amend, can be decided.

In smaller meetings, like a committee or board meeting, often only four motions are used:

- To Introduce (Motion)
- To Change a Motion (Amend)
- To Adopt (Accept a Report Without Discussion)
- To Adjourn (End the Meeting)

Remember, these procedures are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner. Parliamentary procedure should not be used to prevent discussion of important issues.

Board and committee chairpersons and other leaders may want to acquire training in meeting facilitation and in using parliamentary procedure. Additional information on meeting processes, working with many types of people, and using *Robert's Rules* is available from community resources such as the League of Women Voters, United Way, Lions Club, etc. Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, by O. Garfield Jones, is an excellent guide for neighborhood association chairs to familiarize themselves with this information.

V. Your Association's Meetings

The following summary will help you determine when to use the actions described in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Parliamentary Procedures at a Glance

- 1) A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the chair before it can be discussed.
- 2) If you want to move, second or speak to a motion, stand and address the chair.
- 3) If you approve of the motion as it is, vote for it.
- 4) If you disapprove of the motion, vote against it.
- 5) If you approve of the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.
- 6) If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate quorum or committee with instructions to report back.
- 7) If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a quorum or committee with the power to act.
- 8) If you feel that the pending question should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to table the motion.
- 9) If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.
- 10) If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.
- 11) If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a quorum or committee, move the motion be recalled.
- 12) If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.
- 13) If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.
- 14) If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.
- 15) If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move to limit the time of such speeches.
- 16) If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide or split the motion.

V. Your Association's Meetings

How to Prepare an Agenda

The agenda is an important resource you will need to conduct a successful and orderly meeting. An agenda states the purpose, timeframe and goals of a meeting. It outlines each topic to be covered and can designate an amount of time allotted to each subject. List who is responsible for each topic and the type of action needed to help clarify the goals and direction of the meeting.

Your association should strive to send out the agenda in advance so people know what is expected of them and what will happen at the meeting. Generally, a ten (10) day notice is sufficient. This action may serve to peak interest in the group. It will also serve to remind your neighbors of the upcoming meeting.

The following list includes points to consider when preparing an agenda. A sample agenda has been presented in Appendix A.

- The agenda should be as short and concise as possible.
- Identify and list each item on the agenda. Include who is responsible for the presentation, what kind of action is needed (when appropriate) and the time allotted for the presentation.
- Try to keep your meetings to ninety (90) minutes or less.
- Generally, plan the agenda to mix items of importance. Alternating major items of less importance can benefit the flow of the meeting.
- At the opening of the meeting, ask for changes, clarifications, or additions to the agenda.
- Include an ending time for the meeting. In support of credibility, honor the closing time as scheduled.



V. Your Association's Meetings

Committee Reports

A written record of your committee's actions will assist you in sharing that information with the larger association. In addition, documenting the activities of your committees makes good sense. It not only helps you track your group's progress and decisions, but also provides a permanent historical record that future association leaders can refer back to in their own decision-making processes.

When writing a committee report, document what transpired at the most essential level. In recording minutes, details are very important. The following should help you accomplish this task:

Sample Committee Report

Name of Committee

Date of Association Meeting: (When report is presented)

Committee Members Present: (List by name)

Agenda Item Number: (Should correspond to the Board Agenda number)

Situation or Issue: (Detail as much as appropriate)

Options or Potential Solutions: (List at least 2 or 3 options that were considered by the committee, with the advantages and disadvantages of each clearly identified)

Recommendations: (Specify which option is being recommended and why it should be adopted)

Action required: (Define what action the entire Board needs to take)

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Creating the Formal Structure of Your Association

The volunteers in your neighborhood association will work on any number of projects and commitments over time. This section will address legal and fiscal requirements of your neighborhood association.

Your neighborhood association should be organized in a way that best suits the needs of your group. If you are a small neighborhood association that deals with small sums of money, you do may not wish to incorporate or apply for non-profit tax exempt status. You could simply write bylaws, join the City of Arlington's Neighborhood Network, apply for an assumed business name, receive a tax ID number, and/or open a checking account.

Since neighborhood associations are not required to organize in any particular way, there are a number of options you may want to consider. Again, do what is best for your neighborhood association.

Things Your Organization May Want to do

Some research might be necessary before you decide which of these optional actions you need to complete. The mission and size of your organization, level of activity and amount of money you have are among the many factors that determine the best status for your neighborhood association. The following tips are things your organization may choose to do:

- **Write bylaws.** Bylaws can help clarify boundaries and responsibilities, officers, rules of procedure, and other relevant issues.
- **Open meetings and records.** Meetings and records should be made available to any person requesting such information.
- **Accounting.** Even if you are dealing with small sums of money, you should set up a bookkeeping system. The bookkeeping system that you adopt will be determined by your group's needs. The larger the amount of money your organization receives, the greater the need for a sophisticated accounting system.
- **Business name.** Your neighborhood association may wish to apply for a business name to confirm your identity.
- **Tax I.D. Number.** Similar to a Social Security number for your neighborhood association, this number is necessary to open a bank account and is obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). You will need to contact the IRS in Austin to make application for your tax identification number.

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- **Incorporate.** You can incorporate in the State of Texas as a non-profit corporation. This is necessary if you intend to apply for non-profit, tax exempt status. Corporations must comply with a number of legal and fiscal requirements, some of which are outlined in this section.
- **Tax exempt status.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows neighborhood associations to apply for a tax-exempt status. You will have to apply to the IRS in Austin to secure this status.
- **Bulk mailing permit.** The post office offers a special rate to non-profit, tax exempt organizations. However, this designation must be applied for by your organization. You should contact the central post office in Downtown Arlington to identify the proper procedures for obtaining this permit.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Bylaws

Your organization should consider creating bylaws as a part of how it does business. Bylaws establish the “rules” governing the internal affairs of an organization. They are the constitution for your organization that establishes the legal requirements for the group. Bylaws govern the way you must function as well as the roles and responsibilities of your officers. They are important to the maintenance of order and credibility in the organization. Bylaws are also an integral and absolute part of the process for obtaining tax-exempt status by the federal government. They can be of great benefit to new organizations by helping members clearly define and understand the purpose, procedures, and role of their neighborhood association.

Bylaws should also be reviewed periodically. This will help orient new members to the purpose and processes of the organization. Reviewing bylaws on a regular basis will ensure that your rules continue to meet the group’s needs. When bylaws are updated, members of the City’s Neighborhood Network should send a copy to Neighborhood Services at City Hall, 101 West Abram, Arlington, Texas, 76010.

This section includes a list of what information you should include in your bylaws and an outline to use in writing your own. Also, a complete set of sample bylaws is included in Appendix B, which can be used as the basis for your own bylaws or simply as a guide in their preparation.

Remember, bylaws are the governing set of rules for your particular neighborhood association. It is, therefore, important that you think about the needs of your group and then tailor your bylaws to meet your needs. Be as specific as possible, yet allow for flexibility within your organization. Your bylaws will be a part of your neighborhood association for a long time.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Sample Bylaw Organizational Outline

- **Article I Purpose**
 - Section 1 Name of Organization
 - Section 2 Purpose of Your Neighborhood Association
- **Article II Membership**
 - Section 1 Membership Qualifications
 - Section 2 Membership Voting
- **Article III Dues**
- **Article IV Meetings**
 - Section 1 General Membership Meetings
 - Section 2 Special Membership Meetings
 - Section 3 Agenda
 - Section 4 Quorum
 - Section 5 Participation
 - Section 6 Procedures
- **Article V Board of Directors**
 - Section 1 Number of Board Members
 - Section 2 Terms of Office
 - Section 3 Eligibility for Board Service
 - Section 4 Duties of Board Members
 - Section 5 Election of Board Members
 - Section 6 Board Vacancies
 - Section 7 Duties of Board Officers
 - Section 8 Board Meetings
 - Section 9 Emergency Powers
 - Section 10 Termination for Non-Attendance
- **Article VI Committees**
- **Article VII Conflict of Interest Procedures**
 - Section 1 Definition
 - Section 2 Declaring the Conflict of Interest
 - Section 3 Abstention From Voting
- **Article VIII Grievance Procedures**
 - Section 1 Eligibility to Grieve
 - Section 2 Complaint Receipt
 - Section 3 Final Resolution

- **Article IX Procedure for Consideration of Proposals**
 - Section 1 Submission of Proposals
 - Section 2 Notification
 - Section 3 Attendance
 - Section 4 Dissemination

- **Article X Public Meetings/Public Records Requirements**

- **Article XI Boundaries**

- **Article XII Non-Discrimination**

This statement should outline the association's commitment to include all members of their neighborhood as defined under the "Boundaries" section of the bylaws. Be as inclusive as possible.

- **Article XIII Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws**

Many neighborhood associations find it helpful to adopt "standing rules" or "operating procedures" separate from the bylaws. These rules generally may be changed more easily than bylaws may be amended. The purpose of such rules is to record agreements of a particular board or set of members about how to conduct meetings and other activities. Such rules should never be in conflict with the bylaws. Instead, they should address more detailed procedures than are covered in the bylaws. The key concept of standing rules or operating procedures is that they reflect the desires of the current board or members and are changed when the desires/needs of the group change.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

General Operating Rules

Some groups have adopted the following very simple operating rules for all meetings:

- One person speaks at a time.
- Speak from your own experience.
- No put-downs of yourself or others.
- No cross talk (i.e. no side conversations or interrupting the speaker to dispute points).

Other groups include a list of the committees established for the current year in their operating rules. They may also describe the method for selection of committee chairs (i.e. does the board chair appoint committee chairs or do the committee members elect their own chair).

The rules may also incorporate detailed descriptions of board committees and committee chair responsibilities.

While all of the matters described above could be described in bylaws, including them in general operating rules instead of the bylaws helps communicate to current members of the group that these are their rules, representing their choices. Because bylaws are designed to be the major, long-term governing document, the process for amending them is designed to assure careful consideration. If the group keeps operating procedures out of the bylaws and changes them readily, it can maintain compliance more easily and have the advantage of clear written rules as a shared basis for operations.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Open Meetings and Records Policy

Your neighborhood association should be open to all of the stakeholders in your neighborhood. The wording of your bylaws should reflect this intent and desire.

Bylaws should indicate that the neighborhood association includes all members of the neighborhood regardless of race, religion, creed, national origin, religious affiliation, sex, marital status, or tenancy status. Tenancy status refers to whether or not the person owns a business or home, or if the person rents or leases space in the area. The city of Arlington is committed to the concept that all residents, business or residential, have a fundamental right and responsibility to participate in the civic process.

Managing Your Association's Monetary Assets

Every neighborhood association accumulates money for one reason or another over time. The association needs a management system in place for dealing with these funds.

What kind of bank account should be opened and how do you go about opening an account for your organization? These are questions that should be made by the board of directors on behalf of the entire membership.

Whether your association chooses to become a corporation or if you decide to designate a person, either can open a bank account for the group. If you are a corporation and you also have nonprofit status, you may be eligible to receive free or reduced fee banking privileges at some banks. Check with several banks to get the best option for the group. If there is a bank in or near your neighborhood approach them about becoming a member of your association.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Opening a Bank Account

There are certain procedures you should keep in mind when opening a bank account for your neighborhood association. The procedures are as follows:

1. Obtain a Tax Identification Number. A tax identification number is a federal number that is filed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). You must have this number to open an account with any bank. This enables the bank to report the earnings of your account to the IRS. If you do not have a number, get one from the IRS. (See page 59.)

If the organization does not have a tax ID number yet, you could open an account temporarily with a member's personal Social Security Number. On many occasions the group's Treasurer or Secretary will use his/her Social Security Number to open an account. However, please keep in mind, that the person whose number is being used is personally responsible for paying taxes on the additional interest income reported by the bank to the IRS. The neighborhood association may want to reimburse the secretary or treasurer for this expense.

2. The Secretary of your neighborhood association along with anyone else who will be signing on the account must sign signature cards. You will then also need the Chairperson or President's signature (or another designated officer of the corporation).
3. If you are a not-for-profit corporation, you must provide a copy of the Articles of Incorporation stamped "Filed" by the State of Texas to the bank. If you are not a corporation, bring a copy of your bylaws and a copy of the minutes of your first meeting. You will also be required to identify the names and positions of people who are authorized to conduct business on behalf of the organization.
4. The bank will provide a card with wording for a resolution authorizing the bank account. The board of the incorporated neighborhood association or the general membership of an unincorporated association must adopt the resolution.
5. Not all non-profit organizations receive waivers of the bank service charge. Banks may waive or reduce service charges to organizations that provide a necessary public service. The decision to waive the charge is at the discretion of the individual bank.
6. Personal identification, such as a Texas driver's license or U. S. passport, is required to open any type of account.
7. Determine your association's type of account. If you are a nonprofit organization and are eligible for a nonprofit account, there may be no charge or a reduced fee for the service the bank is offering. However, you may not be able to choose the type of account you would like. If your association is required to pay for an account, you can choose any account you would like, depending on your association's needs.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Types of Accounts to Consider

- **Checking.** Any accounts open to potential individual customers are open to neighborhood associations. The least expensive usually have minimum deposit requirements. Your association should obtain pre-numbered checks.
- **Savings.** If your group will be making a limited number of withdrawals, you might be better off with a savings account rather than a checking account. The best arrangement is often a savings account with checking privileges. These usually require a minimum account balance.

There are two things to consider when determining the type of bank account for your neighborhood association:

- The frequency of withdrawing funds.
- The amount of money your association has to deposit. Do you have enough to keep a minimum balance in your account or pay services fees, if any?



VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Bookkeeping for Your Association

Regardless of the amount of money your organization has, it is important that you keep track of whatever money does come into or go out from your organization. It is a good idea to have an accountant or bookkeeper help you set up a set of books from the start. Then let someone who feels comfortable with numbers and figures take on bookkeeping responsibilities. The sooner your system is set up, the easier it is to keep accurate financial records.

The following system is recommended to help keep your group's records accurate. This is a double entry system. The system provides a record of all money received and where it came from, and all the money paid out and the purpose for which it was utilized.

I. Cash Receipts and Cash Disbursements

All money coming into or going out from the organization should be recorded on a daily basis (or whenever you have something to record). These transactions are recorded in a format called a journal.

- **Cash Receipts Journal**

Record the total amount of money (cash or checks) the day it is received and the source of each amount, i.e., contributions, grants, sale of advertising, etc.

- **Cash Disbursements Journal**

Record each disbursement from each bank account. Disbursements made by check should be recorded with the check number, date of check, the payee (who the check is made out to), amount of the check, and the purpose of the disbursement. For savings accounts without preprinted checks, record the date of withdrawal, amount and purpose (use) of the funds. Photocopy the withdrawal slip and file with cash receipts journal to create a record of who withdrew the money.

II. General Ledger

Associations with many different sources of receipts or many different categories for disbursements, particularly those that receive foundation grants that restrict the use of the grant money, may need to set up a General Ledger. The General Ledger is essential for an organization that wants to use the accrual basis of accounting which records amounts owed to the organization (receivables) and amounts owed by the organization (payables). If you think your association needs a General Ledger or has significant payables or receivables, you may choose to seek assistance from a trained accountant to set up your system.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

The Treasurer or another designated person should prepare a written financial report for each board meeting. The report should present the results of each month's activity. At a minimum, the report should include the following elements:

- Cash available at the beginning of each month
- Total receipts during each month (with breakdown by source)
- Total disbursement during each month (with breakdown by type – i.e. postage, supplies, printing).
- Cash available at the end of the month

The cash at the beginning of the month plus the cash received less the cash disbursed must equal the cash at the end of the month.

As the organization gets larger, you may choose to use a more standard format for financial reports, such as the Balance Sheet and Statements of Support, Revenue and Expenses. You may also want to compare the funds received and disbursed to the budget adopted by your board. Even in a very small organization, it is essential that the bank reconciliation should be available to prove that the amount of cash reported on the financial statement at each month end agrees to the reconciled bank statement. Reconciliation involves adjusting the bank balance for outstanding checks and deposits. If no one in the organization is familiar with bank reconciliation ask an accountant or bookkeeper to teach the treasurer a simple reconciliation method.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

The Association's Business Name

Filing for an Assumed Business Name

To do business as an association in the State of Texas, the least you must do (legally) is to file and receive an assumed business name. Basically, an assumed business name lets the public know with whom they are doing business. Unlike a corporation, an assumed business name does not provide liability protection to the people in the organization or business.

To get a business name, you must do the following:

1. Write to the State of Texas and ask for an assumed business name form, no. 503. The address is:

Texas Secretary of State
Corporations Section
P.O. Box 13697
Austin, Texas 78711

Phone: 512-463-5555
Website: www.sos.state.tx.us/corp
2. File the application with the Department of Commerce, Corporation Division.
3. You must renew the application two years later. After the first renewal, it is renewed every five years.
4. To ensure that renewal forms are sent automatically, keep an address of the authorized representative or principal officer current with the Corporation Division.

Tax Identification Number

Every neighborhood association should have a federal tax ID number. Basically, this number is like a Social Security number for your organization. It is used for opening bank accounts, applying for tax exempt status, filing IRS tax forms, etc. An organization does not have to be incorporated in order to get a tax ID number.

Contact the IRS in Austin and ask for a tax ID form, SS-4. It is a short form and only takes a minimum amount of time to complete. Return the completed form to the IRS office in Austin at the address identified on the form.

It takes six to eight weeks to receive the ID number. If you need your number before it is sent to you (for a bank account or nonprofit status form), simply state that you have applied for the number and have not yet received it.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Articles of Incorporation

Corporations are intangible entities that are recognized by the law. A corporation conducts itself somewhat like an individual person, but since it is not, it needs people to function. These people are its board of directors. The general membership make up the body of the corporation.

Incorporating is an option available to all neighborhood associations. One compelling reason for neighborhood associations to become corporations is that corporations provide some liability protection to their members. The corporation, not the individuals, is the legal entity responsible for its actions. If there is ever a legal situation, your neighborhood association (as a corporation) is liable for its actions, not its individual members. Incorporating, however, may not be appropriate for your situation. Consult with an attorney before you decide to incorporate your association.

To become a corporation in Texas, you must follow these three steps:

1. Obtain Articles of Incorporation form no. 202 from the State of Texas at:

Texas Secretary of State
Corporations Section
P.O. Box 13697
Austin, Texas 78711

Phone: 512-463-5586
Website: www.sos.state.tx.us/corp

When you request incorporation papers, ask for the nonprofit incorporation form. Neighborhood associations are eligible to be considered as not-for-profit corporations.

2. Fill out and return the application with the necessary fee that is appropriate for the type of status you have chosen for your corporation.
3. Renewal: A corporation must file an annual fee and report statement. These are due a year (yearly) after the date you incorporated. Renewal forms will be sent to registered agent. Make sure that your address is kept current with the State of Texas.

NOTE: Filing for nonprofit status does not mean you are also tax exempt. You must also file an application with the Federal IRS to become tax exempt. If however, you intend to get a tax exempt status, you must first be qualified as a not-for-profit corporation.

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Articles of Incorporation include much of the same information your group will have already written in your bylaws. You can use your bylaws as a guide for writing your Articles of Incorporation. Information needed for your Articles of Incorporation include:

- I. Name of organization and how long it has been in existence.
- II. Type of nonprofit corporation your association is seeking. Examples include organizations that serve the public benefit, mutual benefit, or religious association. To meet the State of Texas not-for-profit and IRS tax-exempt status requirements, your organization must state that your group exists for “public benefit.”
- III. Provisions in the event of dissolution. This will identify what your group will do in the event the group does not survive.
- IV. Members and boundary (include a map).
- V. Board of Directors: Officers, terms, names and addresses, filling vacancies.
- VI. Initial registered office and initial registered agent.
- VII. Incorporator (This is the individual who takes responsibility for filing the Articles of Incorporation and for seeing that the initial board meeting is held to adopt the bylaws.)

NOTE: If your organization plans to apply for tax exempt status, you must include specific provisions regarding: (1) what will be done with the organization's assets in the event of dissolution; (2) prohibition of political activity and dividends; and (3) charitable and educational purposes. Get IRS Publication 557, Obtaining and Maintaining Tax Exempt Status, and use the sample Articles of Incorporation to get the correct wording.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Tax-Exempt Status

Receiving a not-for-profit organization designation does not mean that your organization is automatically tax exempt. However, most neighborhood associations do ultimately choose to apply for a tax-exempt status. To become both nonprofit and tax-exempt, you must do the following:

- I. Obtain not-for-profit corporation status with the State of Texas. As outlined previously, a neighborhood association may choose to become a corporation by writing Articles of Incorporation and applying to the State for status as a nonprofit corporation. However, being a nonprofit corporation does not automatically mean you are also tax-exempt. To receive a tax-exempt status you must continue the process as outlined below.
- II. File an application with the Internal Revenue Service. The form that your group will file and the status you receive depends on how your bylaws are written. If you are organized as an educational or charitable organization, you may be eligible for a 501(c)(3) status. If you are organized as a “civic league,” you may receive a 501(c)(4). Consult with an attorney before you make your final decision as to which organization form best meets your needs.

It is most advantageous to secure the 501(c)(3) status. Having a 501(c)(3) allows individuals or corporations to claim tax-deductible charitable contribution for any donation of money or goods to your neighborhood association. Your group should keep in mind that most foundations will only make grants to organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. If your organization is determined by the IRS to be exempt under 501(c)(4) donors will not be able to claim their contributions as tax-deductible charitable gifts. Most foundations do not make grants to 501(c)(4) organizations.

Before filing the IRS form (1023 for 501(c)(3) status or 1024 for 501(c)(4) status), check with an attorney or CPA for help in determining under which status you qualify. The attorney will also be able to assist your group in filling out the forms for such a qualification.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

To Apply for Federal Tax-Exempt Status

- 1) **Your group must secure the fee required for the IRS application-processing fee.** The fee is \$375 for organizations expected to gross more than \$5,000. Gross receipts mean all funds received before any deductions are made for the association's expenses.
- 2) **Complete all sections of the application (1023 for 501(c)(3) status or 1024 for 501(c)(4) status) that apply to the organization.**
- 3) **Include your employer identification, which is the same as your group's tax ID number:**

If you have one, write it in the space provided.

If you are a newly formed organization and do not yet have an employer identification number, attach a completed Form SS-4. That is, if you have not already applied for one. If you have already applied, just send a copy of the form you have already submitted.

- 4) **Enclose financial statements as requested on the application form:**

Include the statement for the current year. You must also include statements for the period up to and within 60 days of the date the application is filed and the 3 preceding years from that date.

Submit a copy of the association's budget. The budget must include a detailed breakdown of support, revenue, and expenses and a standard balance sheet statement of assets, liabilities, and fund balance for the organization.

If the organization has been in existence less than one year, you must also submit proposed budgets for the next 2 years showing the amounts and types of receipts and expenditures anticipated. You should also list the anticipated sources of these funds.

- 5) **Include a conformed copy of the complete organizing instrument.** In Texas, the organizing instrument is the Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws.

Articles of Incorporation: The copy of your organization's Articles of Incorporation must have the "Filed" stamp and date from the State of Texas Corporation Commission on them.

Bylaws: A conformed copy is one that agrees with the original and all amendments to it and displays an original signature of an officer attesting to the date the bylaws were approved.

Your organizing instrument, either expressly or by operation of state law, must limit your activities to those permitted under section 501 (c) and must provide for a proper distribution of your net assets upon dissolution.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

6) Have the 1023 or 1024 application signed by one of the following:

An officer who is authorized to sign; or

A person authorized by power of attorney (submit a copy of the power of attorney as well).

7) If any additional information is required, make sure you provide the name and telephone number of a contact that can be reached during business hours.

NOTE: Make sure your application is complete. Submit your completed application to the IRS office in Austin, Texas. Be aware that one or more IRS employees regarding your application may contact you. If you do not complete all applicable parts of the application or do not provide all required attachments, the IRS will return the incomplete application to you. If this happens, promptly complete the missing information or provide the necessary attachments and then resubmit the application.

After you have applied for and received nonprofit incorporation status from the State of Texas and received a tax ID (employer ID) number from the IRS, you must also:

1. Submit the application for tax exempt status and the required processing fee.
2. Receive a letter from the IRS documenting that the organization has been determined to be tax exempt.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Board Liability Issues

Once you begin your board membership recruiting efforts, you will undoubtedly be confronted with potential board members who fear being liable for board actions. Many board members have questions about the possibility of becoming personally financially liable as a result of board service.

In most cases, the board cannot be held liable for the corporation's debts. However, it is very important that the organization "incorporate" to receive this protection for its individual board members. If you seek this protection, you must complete the process as defined earlier in this document.

In general, board members of nonprofit corporations are not liable for the corporation's debts. For example, if the corporation had a large printing job done by a printer and then was unable to pay the bill, the printer would not be able to collect from individual board members because the debt is with the corporation. In order to be able to collect from individual board members, the printer would have to prove either that an individual board member had guaranteed or co-signed on the amount or that the board had been grossly negligent. It is generally very difficult to prove gross negligence if the board produces evidence that they met regularly, considered financial decisions carefully, and used careful regard in making decisions on behalf of the association in light of the information available to them at the time.

Many non-profits put a provision in the bylaws indemnifying board members in the event they are sued as a result of board service. These indemnifications are promises that the corporation will repay the board members for costs of defending themselves in lawsuits and/or for costs of judgements against board members. For this reason, larger organizations carry directors' and officers' liability insurance.

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Even if your organization chooses to pay for directors' and officers' liability insurance, there are several steps you should take to protect board members from potential personal liability:

- Conduct regular board meetings and keep members well informed.
- Implement a reliable system for keeping detailed minutes of all board meetings, recording which members attended, and the nature of all board discussions.
- Secure adequate insurance coverage for all activities that are sponsored by your organization.
- If your association has employees, you should be absolutely certain that the association has met all tax and reporting requirements under the law.

Most individual homeowner's policies can provide coverage for the policyholder's volunteer activities at a very low additional annual fee. Check with your insurance agent to see what volunteer coverage is available.

VI. Creating a Formal Structure

Bulk Mail Permits

If your organization meets Postal Service standards for non-profit status, you are also eligible to obtain a special bulk mail permit. This will give your organization a substantially reduced rate when sending bulk quantities of mail. However, to receive this designation, you must first apply and obtain a bulk mail permit. You should be advised that there are a number of stipulations for using this reduced bulk mail permit. The following list highlights some of these stipulations:

- Your organization must obtain specific approval from the US Postal Service to mail at “nonprofit” or bulk rates.
- While most organizations with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status will qualify for US Postal Service nonprofit mailing privileges, the Postal Service must make a separate determination for each organization. Organizations that have not obtained a 501(c)(3) status may qualify for Postal Service nonprofit mailing permits by completing a detailed application. It is much easier, however, to be accepted for nonprofit mailing by the Postal Service if the organization has 501(c)(3) status.
- This special rate is limited to a minimum of 200 pieces of the same mailing, usually by similar zip code.
- The mail must be bundled in accordance with specific instructions from the Postal Service. Contact the postmaster at your local post office for details on the procedures for bundling.

To obtain a bulk mail permit, the following steps must be followed:

- 1) An application for authorization to mail at special bulk third-class rates, Form 3624, must be filed by the organization that intends to deposit mailings. The application is available at the main post office at 3090 East South Street in downtown Arlington.
- 2) An application filed by your neighborhood association seeking authorization as a qualified nonprofit organization must include evidence that the applicant meets all the requirements. Acceptable evidence includes a certificate of exemption from federal income tax or a copy of filed Articles of Incorporation as a nonprofit corporation.
- 3) Once the post office has received all pertinent information, the postmaster sends the application form with all supporting papers to the local mail classification center. There the postmaster will approve or deny the application. Additional information may be needed to support or clarify the application. Failure to furnish the necessary information can be reason for denial.
- 4) If the application is denied, the applicant can appeal the decision by submitting a written appeal to the postmaster within 15 days of the applicant’s receipt of the postmaster’s decision.
- 5) Authorizations to mail at the special bulk third class rates will be revoked for non-use if no special mailings occur within a given two-year period.
- 6) Once your permit has been granted, an annual bulk mailing fee must be paid once each calendar year. This fee must be paid at or before the time of the first bulk rate mailing of each calendar year.

Regulations and rates concerning bulk mail change frequently. Obtain a current copy of applicable regulations from the Postal Service.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Communicating with Your Neighbors

Communication is one of the most important functions of a neighborhood association. People are interested in what is happening in their neighborhoods and need to know about activities as well as recent accomplishments. The exchange of information between the members of your group is crucial to the long-term success of your association. Good publicity will inform your neighbors about the next scheduled meeting, a current issue, or the completion of a successful neighborhood improvement project.

Publicizing events can be accomplished in many ways. The type of activity, the amount of time you have to get the word out, the amount of money you can spend, and the number of volunteers available to work will determine the best type of publicity. The pages that follow will provide a few tips on how to meet your association's communication goals.

Newsletters and Flyers

A newsletter is probably one of the most common formal ways to share information. It is a great way for communicating with your neighbors. Newsletters may be published monthly, quarterly, annually, or any frequency that works for your neighborhood.

Funding for the production and mailing of newsletters may be raised from dues collected from residents, donations from local businesses, grant funds, advertising in the newsletter, and a variety of other sources. Your neighborhood could also consider distribution by hand by area residents. A block captain system often works well for distributing information.



VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Newsletters and Flyers

Your Association's Newsletter Editorial Policy

Standards and editorial policies are very important to the credibility of a newsletter and its editor. Your neighborhood association should decide what is important and what is acceptable to your group. Make these rules available to the entire group in writing. In fact, this may be perfect subject matter for the association's first newsletter. In addition, the following are some policies that could be included in your association's editorial policies and standards:

- The association is wholly responsible for the content of their individual neighborhood newsletter. The content should be reviewed by several members to ensure that nothing objectionable has been included.
- Send a complementary copy of your neighborhood's newsletter to the City of Arlington's Neighborhood Services Department.
- Articles presenting personal opinions of an individual citizen of the area should be identified as such and the name of the author must be included.
- Newsletters should not include statements which could be considered libelous or defamatory. If there is a question about the comment, do not use it.
- Statements in support of or in opposition to any political candidate or ballot measure should not be printed in the newsletter. Every measure should be taken to keep the newsletter outside the arena of politics.
- Positions taken or recommendations voted on by a neighborhood association are matters of record and may be reported in newsletters. Efforts should be made to report positions taken by neighborhood boards relating to community issues in the newsletters.

When creating your first newsletter, read any existing newsletters to see what style best meets your own needs. The newsletter should be a dynamic publication and, as such, should grow and evolve as the needs of the group change.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Newsletter Production

Producing a newsletter should be a group effort with residents submitting ideas and articles to the editor. One way is to have an editor and one or more persons to help gather news. A production team to put the newsletter together and prepare it for mailing might also be helpful.

The following ideas may make your newsletter easier to create and produce:

- **Neighborhood blocks/areas:** Divide the neighborhood up into different areas to cover. This will ensure that all of the neighborhood is covered. Decide on areas of interest and who will cover them. The following are some ideas for articles:
 - Meeting agendas and minutes from the last meeting.
 - Important issues that affect your entire neighborhood.
 - Lighter news, features, volunteer recognition, businesses and neighbors.
 - Events and meetings. It's important to provide adequate notice of meetings and topics under consideration.
 - Networking: News from other neighborhood organizations in your area.
- **Deadline:** Establish a deadline for the submission of stories and stick to it. To find the appropriate deadline or day, count back from the day the newsletter will be delivered:
 - Subtract one or two days to edit and prepare the copy for the printer.
 - Subtract three to five days for production, printing, and preparing (including labeling, sorting by zip code, and delivering it to the post office).
 - Subtract at least two days for the Post Office to deliver.

A good rule of thumb is to complete the newsletter at two to three weeks before you want it to be delivered.

- **Editor:** The editor should determine what information is included in the newsletter, assign stories to be written, and make sure all of the stories are completed in a timely fashion.

After people turn in their written materials, an editor edits for grammar and accuracy of the content. The editor should see that the information included in the article is complete and accurate and that it meets the editorial policies. If not, the editor should seek any additional information to augment the story.

When preparing a copy of your newsletter for the printer, use a good typewriter or word processor. Quality presentation is important for your association's newsletter credibility. There are also many computer software packages that can make this job much easier.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Flyers For many of your association's activities a simple flyer announcing the activity, location, date and time is sufficient. Flyers are often the backbone of neighborhood association communications. They are the least expensive, the simplest to create and require no ongoing time commitment from neighborhood volunteers. Flyers are often used in conjunction with other forms of publicity.

Effective flyers should include the following elements:

- Creative artwork or graphics is a plus for a flyer. However, a simple flyer with the correct information may suffice to get the word out to the neighborhood.
- A quick trick to utilize on flyers is to cut out artwork that you find from other sources and paste it onto your flyer. Be careful not to reproduce art that has been copyrighted. You can do this with a copier, or with desktop publishing clip art. There are also many clip art books that have pictures and designs for this purpose.
- Flyers can be distributed in a number of ways. They can be hand delivered, mailed, left in small piles at locations throughout the area (i.e., churches, stores, senior centers, etc.), put up on bulletin boards in your community, or inserted in other publications. A combination of methods is often best.
- When preparing a flyer remember to include:
 - Name of your organization
 - The event that you are announcing
 - Date
 - Time
 - Location
 - Phone number for your association's contact person.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Distribution Some neighborhood associations publish one newsletter each month, others publish quarterly. However, it is important that once you decide on a number that your group adheres to that distribution schedule. Reliability is crucial to maintaining your association's credibility.

The following list highlights options for distributing your newsletters or flyers:

- **Hand Delivery:** This is the quickest way to deliver your newsletter and may be the most cost effective. It can be done up to the day of a meeting, but it should be completed in time to let people plan to attend. Since it is not necessary to have a complete mailing list, hand delivery can get to the greatest number of residents in a neighborhood association.

Hand delivery can be done in a variety of ways:

- Deliver to homes, door-to-door. However, it is illegal to place them in mailboxes. Leave them in the door instead.
 - Deliver through local schools. Check first with the principal to see if they can be sent out with school children.
 - Distribute through the churches and other community institutions.
 - Leave stacks of newsletters at neighborhood stores.
 - Develop a system of distribution utilizing a block leader networking system, such as Crime Watch or COPS networks.
 - Work with businesses that deliver door-to-door. This is usually less expensive than postage.
- **Mailing List:** To qualify for bulk, nonprofit mail permit rates, the neighborhood association needs at least 200 addresses in the regular mailing list. In addition to neighborhood residents, you can include local organizations, churches, schools, businesses, City officials, and the media on your list. It is essential to periodically update the mailing list to ensure that those on it are still residing at the address you have.
 - **Occupant Mailings:** An occupant mailing goes to everyone in the neighborhood. This is a more expensive option.

In order to be effective, a newsletter should get to people's homes before the meetings they announce. Using the special bulk mail rate, the post office requires up to ten days for delivery. Factor this amount of time into the lead-time required for notifying residents about upcoming events. Information about bulk mail rates, regulations and procedures is available from the Main Post Office at 300 East South Street in downtown Arlington.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Publicity

The work of a neighborhood association should be publicized as much as possible. Publicity can encourage greater attendance at an upcoming event and attract media on the day of the sponsored event. Getting the word out, often called public relations (or PR), is an important element for making your event or activity successful.

The media is continually bombarded with requests for coverage from all sorts of groups. Therefore, it is important that you help them by learning and conforming to the standards of the industry. This will help to insure that they take your neighborhood association seriously.

The Arlington Morning News and the Arlington Star Telegram are both actively interested in what is going on in Arlington's neighborhoods. Provide press releases and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to the appropriate contact to ensure that your event is covered adequately. It is also a good idea to try to establish a personal relationship with the person assigned to cover your area.

Press Releases

A press release is an announcement to a newspaper or other printed media. It gives all of the necessary information about the event. The newspaper can choose to print a short informational piece directly from the release or go after a larger story. In that case, the press release is an invitation to investigate the event.

There is a standard press release format that should be followed. The format is as follows:

- All releases should be typewritten on 8 1/2 by 11" piece of paper
 - The heading should include:
 - Your organization's name, address and the name of the contact person typed in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Include a contact phone number.
 - A release date noted in the upper right-hand corner. This indicates when the release may be used. If at all possible, indicate "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE." If it is not for immediate release, indicate the date this information can be published.
- 1.) Start off with a bold headline that summarizes your press release in a catchy way.
 - 2.) Begin typing the copy one third of the way down the first page.
 - 3.) Double or triple space the copy. Never single space your press release.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Sample Press Release

SOME Neighborhood Association

February 12, 1998

101 West Abram Street

For Immediate Release

Arlington, Texas 76010

Contact: Randall Smith, (817) 444-4444

“SOME Neighbors Preserve Historic Building”

Members of the SOME Neighborhood Association are celebrating the victory won after a six-month battle to keep the abandoned SOME Church from being torn down. The SOME Church, once an anchor in the neighborhood, has recently been placed on the City’s list of historic buildings. Neighborhood groups hope to turn the building into a community resource for arts programs for the community’s youth.

Neighbors and interested citizens are invited to an open house to discuss the future of the SOME Church to be held on Saturday, March 14, 1998 in the Theater foyer, 4455 North Center Street.

For more information contact: Randall Smith, (817) 444-4444

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

Television and Radio Since we live in such a technological age, it is likely that you will want to get your information out over the electronic media. Television and radio are good avenues for public relations.

The simplest approach to electronic media is to write a news announcement that can be read over the air. Many radio, cable, and TV stations have community announcements that are read or character generated via air or cable. These are called Public Service Announcements (PSAs). The Federal Communication Commission requires the media to play a certain number of public service announcements as a condition for permitting the media. Check with your local stations regarding their policy and requirements for putting PSAs on the air.

If you are serious about getting your message out, you could make an audio or video tape to be played by the various stations. Although it is much easier to send a simple, written PSA to the stations than produce your own video commercial, you may have a volunteer in your neighborhood with some expertise or interest in this type of production. Some stations may be able to help with production. Whether you write an announcement or produce a commercial quality PSA, keep a few things in mind:

- Most stations accept public service announcements of about 30 seconds.
- When you write for radio or TV, you are writing to be heard, not read. Therefore, keep your writing sharp and crisp. Write like you are speaking.
- Do not forget to include the day and date of your event, the location of the event, and a contact person and phone number.

Public Access Cable An important resource for getting your neighborhood association message out to the community is cable TV's public access programming. There is no better way to get exposure for your neighborhood association than on TV. This form of publicity reaches the largest audience. However, keep in mind that the audience that you are addressing is not the usual prime-time viewing person. Generally, the person viewing public access cable has a particular interest or is already a civic-minded person.

VII. Publicity & Public Relations

A Summary of Potential Tools for Communication with Your Neighborhood

Reaching your audience will be a challenge for the entire organization. There are many ways to reach people. The following list represents some ideas for accomplishing this:

- Neighborhood Association Newsletters
- Daily or Weekly Newspapers
- TV, Radio and Cable
- Schools, Churches, and Clubs Newsletters
- Door-to-Door Flyers
- Neighborhood Surveys
 - Mail
 - Phone
 - Door-to-Door
- Person-to-Person Phone Calls
 - To Friends
 - To Neighbors
 - To Network Contacts
- Bulletins, Notices, Pamphlets, and Posters
 - Laundromats
 - Libraries
 - Supermarkets and Stores
 - Local Restaurants
 - Video Stores
 - Waiting Rooms in Dentist/Doctor's Office
- Booth at Local Events
- Coffees for Interested Persons
- Send speakers to the following activities or events:
 - Business Groups
 - Service Clubs
 - Youth Groups
 - Schools
 - Churches
- Cooperative Efforts With Adjoining Neighborhoods
- Lawn Signs
- Letters
- Telephone Tree
- Internet

The sky is the limit when it comes to publicizing your group, events, or issues. Be as creative as possible! The ideas you come up with may make the difference in the success of your neighborhood association.

Appendix A

Sample Meeting Agenda

Item	Person Responsible	Action Required	Time
Call to order	Chair		7:30 p.m.
Announcements	Chair		7:35 p.m.
Minutes	Secretary	Approval	7:40 p.m.
Treasurer's Report	Treasurer	Approval	7:45 p.m.
Standing Committee Reports			
- Finance	Chair	Approval	7:50 p.m.
- Land Use Planning	Chair	Informational	8:00 p.m.
Ad-hoc Committee Reports			
- Bylaws	Chair	Discussion	8:10 p.m.
Unfinished Business			8:25 p.m.
- (List each item)		Possible actions include: refer to committee;	
New Business			8:40 p.m.
- (List each item)		Postpone for further consideration; decision.	
Evaluation	Chair		8:55 p.m.
Adjournment	Chair		9:00 p.m.

Appendix B

Sample Bylaws for Your Neighborhood Association

These sample bylaws outline the information that should be included in your neighborhood association bylaws. The wording is suggested wording only. Neighborhood associations are encouraged to create bylaws that are reflective of their own organization.

ARTICLE I PURPOSE

- Section 1 NAME OF ORGANIZATION: the name of the organization shall be SOME Neighborhood Association (SNA).
- Section 2 PURPOSE OF SNA: The purposes for which SNA is organized are:
- a) To enhance the livability of the area by establishing and maintaining an open line of communication and liaison between the neighborhood, government agencies and other neighborhoods.
 - b) To provide an open process by which all members of the neighborhood may involve themselves in the affairs of the neighborhood.
 - c) To do and perform all of the activities related to said purposes, to have and enjoy all of the powers granted and engage in any lawful activity for which corporations may be organized under the law.
 - d) To be organized exclusively for educational, scientific and charitable purposes. Notwithstanding any statement of purposes or powers aforesaid, this association shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of its specific and primary purpose.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1 MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS: Membership in SNA shall be open to any person who lives and/or owns any real property within the recognized boundaries of SNA.
- Section 2 MEMBERSHIP VOTING: All residents and property owners located within SNA boundaries shall have one vote each to be cast during attendance at any general or special meeting. One representative from each government agency and non-profit organization located within SNA boundaries shall have the same privilege as the residents listed above.

ARTICLE III DUES

The charging of dues or membership fees shall not be made; however, voluntary contributions will be accepted. Activities to raise funds for SNA use may be held if appropriate.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

- Section 1 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS: There shall be at least two general membership meetings yearly. The meetings shall be convened in the Fall and Spring and upon any day decided upon by majority vote of the board of directors. Notification for all general meetings shall require seven (7) days advance written or telephone notice to all active members of SNA and public notice. “Active member” is defined as one who has attended at least one of the last two general or special meetings of the membership.
- Section 2 SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS: Special meetings of the membership may be called by the chairperson or the board of directors as deemed necessary. Notification and purpose(s) of the special meeting shall require seven (7) days advance written or telephone notice to all active members of SNA and public notice.
- Section 3 AGENDA: Subject to the approval of the board of directors, the chairperson shall prepare the agenda for general and special meetings of the membership. Any person may add an item to the agenda by submitting the item in writing to the board of directors at least (7) days in advance of the membership meeting. Any number of SNA may make a motion to add an item to the board, general or special agendas at those respective meetings. Adoption of that motion requires a second and majority vote.
- Section 4 QUORUM: A quorum for any general or special meeting of SNA shall be the number of members in attendance. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, decisions of SNA shall be made by a majority vote of those members present at any meeting.
- Section 5 PARTICIPATION: Any general, special board or committee meeting is open to any person and all who wish to be heard. However, only those eligible for membership are entitled to vote. All actions or recommendations of the general or special meetings shall be communicated to all affected parties, including minority reports.
- Section 6 PROCEDURES: The SNA shall follow Robert’s Rules of Order in all areas not covered by the bylaws.

ARTICLE V BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Section 1 NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS: The board of directors shall determine the exact number of board positions annually. There shall be at least __?__ and no more than __?__ board members.

- Section 2 **TERMS OF OFFICE:** Each director shall hold office for a term of one (1) year for which he/she is elected or appointed and until his/her successor shall have been elected or appointed to take office. (The season in which a position is open for election will be indicated in parentheses following that position's duty description.)
- Section 3 **ELIGIBILITY FOR BOARD SERVICE:** Only persons eligible for SNA membership shall be qualified to hold an elected or appointed position.
- Section 4 **DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS:** The board shall manage the affairs of SNA in the interim between general meetings. The board shall be accountable to the membership; shall seek the views of those affected by any proposed policies or reactions before adopting any recommendations on behalf of SNA; and shall strictly comply with these bylaws.
- Section 5 **ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Board members shall be elected annually by a vote of the membership at its annual meeting. The names of all candidates for the board shall be placed in nomination. Secret written ballots shall be used for voting for board members. Election requires a majority vote of the membership present.
- Section 6 **BOARD VACANCIES:** The board may fill any vacancy on the board or a committee by majority vote of the board in cases involving absences by a board or committee member from three (3) consecutive meetings. A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term and until his/her successor is elected or appointed.
- Section 7 **DUTIES OF BOARD OFFICERS**
- a) **CHAIRPERSON (ELECTED IN THE SPRING):**
The chairperson shall prepare the agenda and preside at all meetings of the board and membership; shall appoint members of committees not elected , with a majority approval of the board, except for members of the Grievance Committee.
- b) **VICE CHAIRPERSON (ELECTED IN THE FALL)**
The first alternate shall assist the chairperson; in the chairperson's absence shall function as chairperson; shall serve as a member of the area board of directors representing SNA.
- c) **SECRETARY (ELECTED IN THE SPRING)**
The secretary shall keep minutes and written records of majority and minority opinions expressed at all meetings; shall be responsible for all correspondence of SNA; shall make records of SNA available for inspection for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

d) **TREASURER (ELECTED IN THE FALL)**

The treasurer shall be held accountable for all funds and shall give an accounting at each general meeting; shall receive, safe-keep and disburse SNA funds, but such disbursement shall require the signature of one other board member, preferably the chairperson.

e) **BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE & COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**
Chairpersons of committees shall inform the board and SNA of all activities of their respective committees.

Section 8 **BOARD MEETINGS:** The board shall meet at least fourteen (14) days prior to any general or special membership meeting and at any other time the chairperson may designate. These meetings shall be open session; however, only board members shall be entitled to vote. Directors shall be notified of board meetings in writing or by telephone in advance. A majority of board members, by signed petition, may call a board, general or special meeting.

Section 9 **EMERGENCY POWERS OF THE BOARD:** In such cases where the board is required to provide neighborhood response before the question is presented to the membership, the board must indicate to the questioner that this is the case. Furthermore, they shall present the action taken at a special or general meeting within 30 days, or within a reasonable time for ratification by the membership where circumstances dictate.

Section 10 **TERMINATION FOR NONATTENDANCE:** Board members failing to attend three consecutive board meetings shall be automatically deemed to have resigned from the board.

ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

The board shall establish both standing and ad hoc committees, as it deems necessary. Committees shall make recommendations to the board for board actions. Committees shall not have the power to act on behalf of the organization without specific authorization from the board.

ARTICLE VII CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Section 1 **DEFINITION:** A conflict of interest exists for a member or board member whenever the member or board member holds a personal financial interest which will be impacted by the action or inaction by SNA on a proposal before the membership or board. A personal financial interest shall include a financial interest held by the member or board

member and/or by members of their immediate family. A personal financial interest includes an ownership interest above 5% of a business that will be impacted by the decision of SNA. Examples of personal financial interest would include: Employment by SNA; ownership of property the use or control of which is being considered by SNA; plans to purchase property the use or control of which is under discussion by SNA, etc.

Section 2 **DECLARING THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Whenever a member or board member determines that they have a conflict of interest relating to an item under discussion, they must inform the body (membership or board) hearing the proposal that the conflict of interest exists.

Section 3 **ABSTENTION FROM VOTING:** Members or board members shall not vote on matters in which they have a conflict of interest.

ARTICLE VIII GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Section 1 **ELIGIBILITY TO GRIEVE:** A person or group adversely affected by a decision or policy of SNA may submit in writing a complaint to any member of the Grievance Committee.

Section 2 **COMPLAINT RECEIPT:** Within seven (7) days of receipt of the complaint, the committee shall arrange with the petitioner a mutually acceptable place, day and hour for a review of the complaint, and will, in writing, within thirty (30) days, recommend a resolution of the grievance to the board.

Section 3 **FINAL RESOLUTION:** The committee shall attempt to resolve the complaint and shall submit a report of their recommendation and/or action to the complainant, board and membership. If the committee, board and petitioner cannot reach agreement, final resolution of the complaint shall be by vote of a majority of the membership at a general or special meeting.

ARTICLE IX PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

Section 1 **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:** Any person or group, inside or outside the boundaries of SNA and city agency may propose in writing items for consideration and/or recommendation to the board. The board shall decide whether proposed items will appear on the agenda of either the board, standing or special committees or general or special meetings.

- Section 2 NOTIFICATION: The proponent and members directly affected by such proposals shall be notified in writing of the place, day and hour the proposal shall be reviewed not less than seven (7) days in advance.
- Section 3 ATTENDANCE: The proponent may attend this meeting to make a presentation and answer questions concerning the proposal.
- Section 4 DISSEMINATION: The SNA shall submit recommendations and dissenting views as recorded from the meeting to the proponent and other appropriate parties.

ARTICLE X BOUNDARIES

- Section 1 BOUNDARIES: Boundaries of SNA shall be defined as follows: Beginning at the _____ ... See the attached map of the association.

ARTICLE XI PUBLIC MEETINGS/PUBLIC RECORDS REQUIREMENT

SNA shall abide by all Texas statutes relative to public meetings and public records. Official action(s) taken by SNA must be on record or part of the minutes of each meeting. The minutes shall include a record of attendance and the results of any vote(s) taken. A summary of dissenting views should be transmitted along with any recommendation made by SNA to the City.

ARTICLE XII NON-DISCRIMINATION

SNA must not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, national origin, income, or political affiliation in any of its policies, recommendations or actions.

ARTICLE XIII ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

All amendments to these bylaws must be proposed in writing and submitted to members at least seven (7) days before voting. Notice of proposal to amend the bylaws, specifying the date, time, and place for consideration, must be provided to all members at least (7) days before voting. Adoption of and amendments to these bylaws shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote by the members present at a general meeting.

Appendix C

Join the Neighborhood Network !

The City of Arlington invites your neighborhood group to become part of the **Neighborhood Network** a directory of neighborhood associations, homeowners associations, crime watch and citizens on patrol groups.

The citizens and neighborhoods of Arlington are our most important resources. Strong viable neighborhoods create a sense of pride by working to keep our neighborhoods vibrant places to live, work and play. For the City of Arlington, the key to our success as the city of choice will be communication and coordination among citizens, neighborhood organizations and city government.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Network is to provide open communication between the City and its neighborhoods. Upon joining the Network your organization will receive future information on city events, construction projects, public hearings and capital improvements in your area.

When you join the Network you will receive a welcome packet that includes:

- A map of your association boundaries
- Neighborhood Handbook series: Organization and Planning
- Zoning and Platting brochures and information
- Overview of the Neighborhood Zoning Notification Program which will provide regular information on proposed zoning changes within one mile of our neighborhood boundaries
- City of Arlington Planning Atlas CD
- Information on any neighborhood-related programs
- Eligibility to apply for neighborhood identification street topper program
- Information on your free neighborhood association website through Neighborhood Link, a nationally recognized community network of associations

Please complete the registration form and return by mail to City Manager's Office, P.O. Box 90231, MS 01-0300, Arlington, Texas 76004-3231. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call R.J. Blair, Neighborhood Coordinator, at 817-459-6104 or email at blairr@ci.arlington.tx.us.

Appendix C



The Neighborhood Network NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION REGISTRATION FORM

Date: _____

Name of Neighborhood Organization: _____

Mailing Address of Organization:

Street/P.O. Box: _____

City/Zip: _____

Fax: _____

Email or Web Site address: _____

Primary Contact Person:

Name: _____

Association Office Held: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Secondary Contact Person:

Name: _____

Association Office Held: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Neighborhood Information

- Neighborhood Association Boundaries: (specify exact streets and geographic boundaries)
North _____ South _____
East _____ West _____
- When was your neighborhood/homeowners association started ? _____
- Who is eligible to be a member of your neighborhood or homeowners association?
(For ex: residents, businesses, organizations, etc.) _____
- How many homes are located in your association's boundaries ? _____
- How many people belong to your association? _____
- Does your association have adopted bylaws? ____ yes ____ no; please include with your application.
- Please attach a list of any subcommittees that have been formed and what their areas of interest are.
- How often does your association meet and when? _____
Where does it meet? _____
- Does your association charge its members dues? ____ yes ____ no
How much: \$ _____ Circle how often dues are collected: Annually Bi-annually Monthly

Please mail this application along with any attachments to:

City Manager's Office, P. O. Box 90231, MS 01-0300, Arlington, TX 76004-3231

